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VIEWS of GOGOL: GOGOL in the LITERARY CRITICISM of V. G. BELINSKII, I. F. ANNENSKII, and V. V. GIPPIUS

BY

ERZSÉBET TOTH

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

in

RUSSIAN LITERATURE

DEPARTMENT OF SLAVIC AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

(SPRING 1987)

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Erzsébet Tóth
(Student's signature)

336 Graudin Village
(Student's permanent address)

St Albert Alberta T8N 2R6

Date: March 6, 1987

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled VIEWS of GOGOL: GOGOL in the LITERARY CRITICISM of V. G. BELINSKII, I. F. ANNENSKII, and V. V. GIPPIUS submitted by ERZSÉBET TOTH in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF ARTS in RUSSIAN LITERATURE.

R. L. Busch
Supervisor

Peter A Rollberg
Supervisor

Brozejko
External Examiner

Date: March 6, 1987

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to examine three major views of Gogol's art which came to the fore during the intervening years of a whole century: from the contemporary reaction of V. G. Belinskii in the 1830's and 1840's, followed by the symbolists' at the turn of the century and finally that of V. V. Gippius in the 1920's and 1930's.

The point of discussion of the first view is Belinskii's realistic bias that has enjoyed great popularity in both pre- and post-revolutionary Russia. Belinskii's position as a literary critic of Gogol's time was an advantageous one, for he could respond immediately upon the appearance of Gogol's work. This, however, also included the disadvantage of not being able to look at Gogol's art overall from a distance. Nevertheless, it is impossible to find any subsequent volume of Gogol criticism which ignores the influence of Belinskii. This is especially so with the Gogol criticism of the Soviet period, for whom Belinskii is so often the yardstick by which all else is measured.

The symbolist view was the first strong opposition to and re-evaluation of the widely accepted realistic trend which had

prevailed not only in Gogol criticism, but also in Russian literary criticism overall. A separate chapter is devoted to I. F. Annenskii's literary criticism as being representative of Russian Symbolism. I intend to pay particular attention to the contrast between the realist interpretation of Gogol's work as a reflection of social conditions and the symbolist emphasis on Gogol's aesthetic viewpoint.

Gippius' literary criticism is the third one which calls for special attention amongst scholarship on Gogol during the period specified above. Gippius was the first critic who did not attempt to categorize Gogol one-sidedly. Instead, he examined Gogol's art more from an aesthetic and literary-historical point of view, while tracing Gogol's personal and artistic development and certain alleged literary influences on him.

Before proceeding to examine these three approaches to Gogol's work, a general overview of Gogol criticism shall be given, including some other relevant scholarship during and after the period concerned.

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Introduction

It is shared by all interpreters of Gogol that no two interpretations of his works are alike. He has been seen as the father of realism who, above all, was interested in giving an accurate portrayal of contemporary Russia. This was first formulated by V. G. Belinskii, who tended to find in Gogol themes and subjects which would verify and sustain his own social concepts.

The view of Gogol as a realist remained dominant in Russia until the end of the century, when the re-evaluation of the literary past led to a fresh look at Gogol's writing. This re-examination denied the primacy of conventional, material "reality" in his work, and stressed its extreme peculiarities. At this stage some critics saw Gogol as a profound thinker whose main concern was to reveal the presence in the world of the Anti-Christ, and to advocate the establishment of an Orthodox theocracy. This view emerged in the spiritualistic climate of the Russian intelligentsia at the turn of the century and was first expressed by D. S. Merezhovskii. It was later developed further by K. V. Mochulskii and N. V. Zen'kovskii.[1]

Later, in the course of the 20th century there developed a third

approach that favoured a formalistic examination of Gogol's work as an assembly of aesthetic devices. Its originator was Andrei Belyi.[2] There have been other types of interpretations aside from the above and each of them claimed Gogol as its own representative - for example, the Slavophiles and Apollon Grigor'ev viewing Gogol as an idealistic romanticist.[3] However, all the different critics too rarely tried to find anything of value in the views of others and had the tendency to be preoccupied with justifying their own theories, convictions or interpretations.

One major characteristic of Gogol's work is, however, indisputable. This is its ambiguity which is the key to understanding how his work could generate so many conflicting interpretations. One must acknowledge the existence of each view, not as being *the* true, *the* correct view, but as evidence of one of the ways in which Gogol's work can be read.

As an attempt to find evidence and to a certain extent justification for the various conflicting interpretations of Gogol's work, one should follow three major lines of Gogolian criticism, i.e., that of Belinskii, the symbolists, and V. V. Gippius, for their critical output provided the basis for the future development of Gogol criticism.

Apart from the ambiguity Gogol's art provided, one should also consider his major influence on the further development of Russian literature. The effect of Gogol's appearance in the 1830's was to determine the path of Russian literature for nearly three decades to come. The question therefore is why it was particularly Gogol, rather than any other writer or group of writers, who is felt to have been so significant for the literary development of this period. To answer this question one has to take a closer look at the Russian literary setting of the 1830's and 1840's.

I. Gogol Criticism Since 1830 - General Iverview

According to many scholars and critics the Russian literary milieu of the 1830's and 1840's was anything but homogenous. The following citation from D. S. Mirskii perhaps best describes the mixed literary setting for the period under discussion:

> The imaginative prose of the 1830's and early 1840's was a chaos, but a fertile chaos. Romanticism and realism, fantasy and everyday life, idealism and satire... all mixed and jumbled together. The chaos was to take a form only in the second half of the 1840's... The main tendencies of the fiction of the period may be classified under three heads: German romanticism, French romanticism, and Russian naturalism.[1]

M. L. Slonim expressed similar views in discribing the literary tendencies of the period concerned, although he sees only the 1830's as "chaotic."[2]

One can mention here as well V. V. Vinogradov's view that there were three main trends that influenced the development of Russian literature in the 1830's. The first trend was the narrative method of Walter Scott, the second various forms of German Romanticism, and the third that of the French "école frénetique"

(neistovaia slovesnost').[3]

Obviously, according to these views, one could not speak of a homogenous literary trend for these two decades. Most scholarship regarding the development of XIX-century Russian literature, sees homogeneity coming about only in the second half of the 1840's.

Gogol, so many of whose works date from the early 1830's, stood at the beginning and not the middle of a literary evolution, one that reflected the late but powerful burgeoning of Russian prose. Besides the above mentioned French, English and German literary strains, one can note the prominence of Fichte's and Hegel's aesthetic thought. It can be argued that all of them coalesced to form both in and through Gogol a peculiarly Russian identity with, as we will see further on in Chapter IV, an admixture of Ukrainian.

From the numerous and varied biographies of Gogol one can conclude that he constantly doubted the validity of his own ideological and aesthetic values, and was constantly struggling to find his own identity both as a writer, who feels himself obligated to continue the cultural heritage of preceding centuries, and as a human being sharing in the common experience of existence. In his struggle to

establish his personal identity Gogol felt himself to be (as indeed he was) isolated from those around him.

Somewhat in opposition to the Mirskii, Slonim, Vinogradov line (re: the heterogeneity), D. I. Chizhevskii speaks of Gogol's *isolation* and *extreme originality* in relation to the ideological and artistic trends of his time. According to this view Gogol did not belong to any reigning political and literary trend, but rather, he reflected the generation of his father.[4] N. V. Zenkovskii attributes this to Gogol's having allegedly belonged more to the Alexandrian era, with its resignation and patriarchal hierarchy, than to the alien age of Nikolai I. He even calls Gogol an "epigon Aleksandrovskoi epochi."[5] Arguably, the difference between two political structures helped to bring about Gogol's isolation and ideological outlook.

Those who take the Chizhevskii--Zenkovskii view to an extreme would argue that Gogol had no literary antecedents. This was first expressed in 1847 by V. G. Belinskii:

> Gogoliu ne bylo obraztsa, ne bylo predshestvennikov ni v russkoi, ni v inostrannykh literaturakh. Vse teorii, vse predaniia literaturnye byli protiv nego, potomu chto on byl protiv nikh.[6]

One must take Belinskii's assertion as coming from the representative

of a culture that was thirsting for a sense of its own non-derivative identity. In any case, Belinskii's statement is disputable, for numerous studies of Gogol have refuted it for very substantial reasons.[7]

It was, however, Belinskii who would identify Gogol's name with Russia's very own *natural school*.. The writers of this school resolved to deal with the "prose of life," with "ordinary," everyday reality, and introduced into their works the *chinovniki* (civil servants) the urban poor, the peasantry, strata of Russian society that had not hitherto received much serious attention. Not just the choice of subject matter, but its treatment, as well, took a new departure. The writers of this school strove to represent society, its classes, customs, manners and language in meticulous detail, in a word, to depict *byt* .

Contemporary critics such as F. V. Bulgarin, O. I. Senkovskii, N. I. Grech (Belinskii called them the "ritoricheskaia shkola")[8] denied the very existence of such a school, seeing it rather as a trend which had developed from the French frenetic school (école frénétique or iunaia Frantsiia).[9] They adjudged that the choice of themes and the methods of description fell well below the aesthetic and literary standards of the day. For them Gogol's art was naturalistic in much the same sense

as Zola's would appear to his contemporaries later in the century. However, this comparison, tempting as it may be, is to be avoided, since Zola's method of naturalism achieved prominance only much later in the remarkably different literary context of the 1860's and 1870's, and was of a different order.

Shortly after Mertvye dushi was published in 1842, Bulgarin and Grech voiced their opinion of Gogol and his *poema*. In their view Gogol had no merit whatsoever, and they went so far as to state that he had a less than perfect command of the Russian language:

> ...dokazano matematicheski, chto ni v odnom russkom sochinenii net stol'ko bezvkusiia, griaznykh kartin i dokazatel'stv sovershennogo neznaniia russkogo iazyka, kak v etoi poeme.[10]
>
> Sprashivaem vsekh russkikh liudei, vsekh chitatelei russkogo iazyka i slovesnosti, vidali li oni, chitali li chto-libo podobnoe i gde tut smysl i iazyk?[11]

They took great umbrage at Belinskii's comparison of Gogol and Pushkin in which he saw Gogol as Pushkin's main literary successor. They judged Gogol to be a pure naturalist who in his subject matter descended to a level beyond the limits of literary viability and acceptable taste.

A much bigger and more influential group of critics, headed by Belinskii, saw evidence in Gogol's writing of what they called the Naturalnaia shkola, i.e., one which emphasized reality. On this basis Belinskii judged Gogol to have been the founder of the *natural school*, which was then viewed as synonymous with a realistic movement in Russian literature: "...naturalnaia shkola deistvitel'no proizoshla ot Gogolia, i bez nego ee ne bylo by."[12]

Just prior to his death, Belinskii wrote an article which can be regarded as a synthesis of his previous opinions both of the *natural school* and of Gogol's significance as a writer.[13] His vindication of the *natural school* had already been put forth in a previous article entitled "Otvet *Moskvitianinu*" where he repudiated the views of his opponents.[14] He is convinced that the *natural school* was both an inevitable and a natural outgrowth of previous Russian literary developments and that it was a response to contemporary needs. Belinskii saw the *natural school* not only as a reaction against romantic idealism, but also as a literary trend that was characterized by an anti-idealistic attitude toward the portrayal of life, an attitude which he called realistic. In the following quote one can see how

Belinskii, qua critic, argued for the hegemony of the *natural school.*

> Kakie romany i povesti chitaiutsia publikoiu s osobennym interesom, kak ne te, kotoryie prinadlezhat natural'noi shkole. . . ? Kakaia kritika pol'zuetsia bol'shim vliianiem na mnenie publiki. . . kak ne ta, kotoraia stoit za natural'nuiu shkolu protiv ritoricheskoi?[15]

In order to prove that the *natural school* emerged as a logical necessity of Russia's literary development, Belinskii, in his articles "Vzgliad na russkuiu literaturu 1847 goda" and "Otvet *Moskvitianinu"* goes all the way back to Kantemir, in whose personality and works the critic already finds that: "....russkaia poeziia obnaruzhila stremlenie k deistvitel'nosti, k zhizni, kak ona est', osnovala svoiu silu na vernosti nature."[16]

Further on Belinskii argues that the naturalistic elements (i.e. realistic) can already be traced back to Fonvizin and Krylov, although these elements appear in the guise of comedy and satire. While Pushkin had also (to a certain extent), incorporated naturalistic devices into his work, it was still Gogol in whose work the naturalistic or realistic elements achieved their greatest expression.

Belinskii can be credited with recognizing comedy and satire as the forebearers of realism, for it is true that realistic literature grew

out of the comic tradition. For all its reliance on grotesque exaggerations, the comic tradition attempted to depict the objective world with maximal clarity of language and with minimal emotional distortion, i.e., it did not delve deeply into the soul, and avoided rhetorical and emotional exaggerations so commonly associated with *belles-lettres*.[17] However, with respect to Gogol proper, Belinskii chose to ignore the fact that Gogol was primarily concerned with expressing his own aesthetic ideals rather than confining himself to a straightforward depiction of social failings and disorders.

Gogol's identification with the formation of the *natural school* was denied or qualified by literary critics in the first quarter of the XXth century. Prince Mirskii for instance, considers 1846 the "annus mirabilis" of the *natural school*, for the first novels of Goncharov and Dostoevskii, the first of Turgénev's Sketches of a Sportsman, and the first fragments of Aksakov's Family chronicle were published in that year. By 1847 all of Gogol's artistic works (with the exception of Mertvye dushi II.) had been written, most of them dating from the 1830's, so, evidently, Mirskii could not consider Gogol to have been a member of this school.[18]

According to V. V. Gippius, it was only after 1841-1842 that Gogol moved away from romantic realism towards naturalism.[19] Gippius connects this turning-point, i.e., 1841-1842, with a gradual subsidence in Gogol's individualism. Gippius accepts Belinskii's view of Gogol, as the "Columbus of naturalism," for Gogol, states Gippius, intentionally depicted the contemptible and the insignificant. By so doing, however, argues Gippius, Gogol followed his own subjective motives, rather than having consciously set out to depict social ailments.[20]

In the course of the 20th century Soviet literary scholars followed Belinskii in continuing to emphasize the realistic substance of Gogol's works. One of them is V. I. Kuleshov, who, while admitting that Gogol's realism oversteps the boundaries of realism as defined by the critics of that school, emphasizes that: "S natural'noi shkoloi prishlo pervoe svezhee oshchushchenie pobedy realizma... A samoe glavnoe, ona byla deistvitel'no splochena vokrug Gogolia i Belinskogo."[21] But for the aforementioned disclaimer about Gogol overstepping the boundaries of realism, one finds little incongruence in the views of Kuleshov and Belinskii. In fact, Kuleshov, a prominent member of the

Soviet educational establishment as developed in the 1930's and 1940's, predictably employs much of the conventional terminology and rhetoric of his predecessor, and, for the most part, merely restates Belinskii's view of Gogol. This is difficult to understand given developments in Gogol criticism from Belinskii to the 1960's. However, it *is* understandable in the context of Soviet literary scholarship's overwhelming tendency to glorify realism from, say, 1930-1960. This meant that scholars should find realist features in the works of all former literary greats, and, if possible, identify them fully and often anachronistically, with the norms of realism. Thus, it is not only Kuleshov who sees Gogol as the founder of realism. Among Soviet critics A. G. Tseitlin and many others consider Gogol as the father of Russian realism.[22] Tseitlin even goes so far as to state that Gogol was one of the main representatives of critical realism, for in Gogol's time: "...v 40-e gody v russkoi literature byli okoncatel'no utverzhdeny printsipy kriticheskogo realizma."[23] As for naturalism in the literary works of the 1840's, Tseitlin admits there was some. He calls it *fiziologiia*.[24]

It was primarily early XX-century critics, who began to

emphasize Gogol's romanticism, rather than his alleged realism. One such critic, Zenkovskii, argues that Belinskii and his school chose to emphasize only one aspect of Gogol's talent, namely his use of realism. Zenkovskii agrees with the earlier interpretation of Gogol as a realist, but only to a certain extent.

> U Gogolia my nahodim romantizm, obramlennyi real'nymi kartinami, svobodnyi ot vsiakoi fal'shi. V etom svoeobrazie romantizma Gogolia, - poetomu Gogol' glava russkogo realizma, no i glava russkogo romantizma.[25]

As can be seen from this citation, the critic considers Gogol's realism to be a more complicated and sophisticated element than it was regarded by Belinskii and his followers., i.e., by N. G. Chernyshevskii and N. A. Dobroliubov. For Zenkovskii this complexity results from Gogol's romantic expectations of life and mankind. To a certain extent, these expectations relate to his aesthetic ideas. In the critic's opinion Gogol was the representative of "aesthetic humanism," his romanticism coming about as a result of the influence of German romanticism. In accordance with it, he believed in the unity of the beautiful and the good, i.e., in the unity of the aesthetic and the moral. It should be noted, however, that it was Gogol himself who was ultimately

responsible for the destruction of this unity in his work, which eventually led him to "religious humanism." Gogol saw the struggle within man as one between the unobtainable ideals of beauty and good on one hand, and the mediocrity, the very vulgarity of everyday existence on the other. The destruction of the unity of the beautiful with the good is very evident in "Nevskii Prospekt," in which the beautiful exists independently of, and, to a certain extent, in opposition to good. In Zenkovskii's opinion Gogol's depictions of life are realistic in the sense and to the degree that they may deal (however superficially), with plausible, and occasionally stereotypical, life situations. Gogol uses a realistic depiction of everyday life as the background to a romantic mood and ideology.

There is another significant interpretation of Gogol's work as *co-evolving* with the *natural school,* which deserves special attention here. This is the interpretation of V. V. Vinogradov, who has devoted several major studies to the topic, his presentation of which would have elicited Belinskii's attacks and biting remarks.[26] The reason for this is that Vinogradov argues in his works that Gogol was very close to and strongly influenced by the archly romantic French frenetic

school.[27]

The influence of *l'école frénétique* on the *natural school* had been alleged on the pages of Biblioteka dlia chtenija, the organ of the "rhetorical school." The critics who owned and published this journal considered this to be a negative influence. It should be noted, therefore, that their position in this controversy did not mean that they were trying to defend Gogol and/or his *school.* On the contrary, they claimed that in what some saw as a *school* was really just the imitation of the French freneticists.[28]

Vinogradov describes the main literary influences on Russian literature of the 1830's and is convinced that it was the third, "frenetic" trend which influenced Gogol's art between 1832-1834, from " 'Krovavyi bandurist" to "Portret."[29] He finds the main characteristics of the "neistovaia shkola" in some of Gogol's work, for example, the depiction of city life, the ironic posture of the author while depicting the trivial and the mundane in everyday life, an emphasis on the grotesque, on terror and on horror. With respect to this last ingredient, Vinogradov cites Jules Janin, whose words read like a manifesto of the main characteristics of the frenetic school:

> nam nadobna *natura uzhasnaia, mrachnaia;;* i ona ne zatrudit pisatelia, i ona vozbudit obshchij vostorg. Itak smelee! tonen'koe bordosskoe vino dlia nas slishkom slabo; vyp'em luchshe bol'shoi stakan vodki . . . I ta ne ochen' krepka dlia nas . . . My mozhem glotat' vinnij spirt; skoro doidem do efira. . . No krainosti da privedut nas k opiumu.[30]

In Vinogradov's view's:

> Dukh noveishei frantsuzkoi shkoly, zarazivshii Gogolia i sushchestvenno izmenivshii napravlenie ego esteticheskikh interesov, otvlek ego ot sentimental'noi idealizatsii, ot poetiki "ukrashennoi prirody" k poiskam novykh form voploshcheniia "goloi natury."[31]

As can be seen, Vinogradov comes to the conclusion that, in the period mentioned above, Gogol is looking for new modes of self-expression and finds in "l'école frénétique" the devices to suit this artistic need.

Belinskii and his circle, however, denied any connection with the French school, and did not concede that Gogol was under its influence. In fact they had a very negative attitude toward this school and countered its effect by denying its actual presence in Russian literature. For his part, Vinogradov cites the censor A. V. Nikitenko's objections to Gogol's ""Krovavyi bandurist," to which he refused to grant publication authorization:

> Eto kartina stradanii i unizheniia chelovecheskogo, napisannaia sovershenno v dukhe noveishei frantsuzkoi shkoly, otvratitel'naia, vozbuzhdaiushaia ne sostradanie i dazhe ne uzhas esteticheskii, a prosto omerzenie.[32]

Belinskii's opinion was even stronger:

> Vse, chto est' otvratitel'nogo v chelovecheskoi prirode, vse ee ukloneniia, vse chto est' uzhasnogo v grazhdanskom obshchestve, vse ego protivorechiia - vse eto oni (romantiki) otvlekli ot prirody cheloveka i ot grazhdanskogo obshchestva, i riad chudovishchno - nelepykh romanov, povestei i dram novodnil ves' belyi svet.... Razvrat, krovosmeshenie, razboi, otsteubiistvo, detoubiistvo, bratoubiistvo, predatel'stvo, kazni, pytki, krov', gnoi, reznia, tiurmy, i doma razvrata - sdelalis' liubimymi pruzhinami dlia vozbuzhdeniia effekta.[33]

Belinskii returns to the discussion of this theme in his article "Vzgliad na russkuiu literaturu 1847 goda" where he again very strongly expresses his views about French freneticism, admitting that one writer, Marlinsky, exemplified some of the main characteristics of freneticist poetics - hyperbole, melodrama, and horrifying effects. It was Gogol, however, argues the critic, who put an end to such a trend before its influence could become more widespread.[34] Vinogradov dismisses Belinskii's denial of this French influence and argues that aspects of French freneticism fell within the framework of the natural

school.

Vinogradov's argument was later opposed by Kuleshov, although not on the basis of Vinogradov's studies. In fact, Kuleshov does not even concern himself with opposing Vinogradov (a formidable task), but goes back to Belinskii's time to criticise Bulgarin and his followers. He strongly denies the influence of the French frenetic school and he believes that only Bulgarin and his literary camp, which would thus have to include Vinogradov, could be so narrow-minded as to consider the *natural school* and French freneticism on the same level.

To Kuleshov, the freneticists were essentially pessimistic and unable to depict any positive values which might lead to an amelioration of the human condition. In contrast, the main purpose of the natural school was to elevate literature from a narrowly aesthetic role to a level on which it would be able to play a role in socio-political development.[35]

Kuleshov examines the development of the *natural school* in detail, dividing it into two branches: the first he terms the "obshchestvenno-psikhologicheskaia," the representatives of which

were Grigorovich, Turgenev, Goncharov, and Dostoevskii, and the second is the so-called "social'no-politicheskaia," the representatives of which were Nekrasov, Herzen and Shchedrin.

Kuleshov admits that the first branch (and only the first!) contained elements of sentimentalism and naturalism, which could also be found in Gogol's work. However, he argues that these were not essential to Gogol's art.

As for the *natural school*, Kuleshov emphasizes that: "V luchshikh fiziologicheskikh ocherkakh est' glavnaia ustanovka podlinnogo realizma, ustanovka na obrisovku tipa, na obobshchaiushii smysl eskiza."[36] Kuleshov further contends that it was in the 1840's that the pinnacle in the development of the realistic trend in Russian literature was reached and its governing method was that of critical realism.[37] Clearly, for him as for Belinskii, the *natural school* and realism go hand in hand.

It is ironic that the term *natural school* was first coined by Bulgarin whose own negative interpretation of this term was so different from that of Belinskii, the latter using it to define his own ideas of the purpose of literature.

After Belinskii's death, Chernyshevskii, who flourished as a literary critic from 1854-1858, and who was also not adverse to criticising other critics, attempted to rehabilitate Belinskii at a time when he had fallen into official disfavour as a result of the furor surrounding his battle with Gogol and others. In 1856 Chernyshevskii began a campaign to restore Belinskii's views to popularity by returning to and developing his tradition of literary criticism. In fact, it was Chernyshevskii who first coined the term, *Gogolevskii period* to describe the Russian literary scene of the 1830's and 1840's. In his series of articles, Ocherki gogolevskogo perioda russkoi literatury,[38] he described Gogol as the father of Russian prose. He believed that Gogol was the most significant figure in contemporary literature, not only because of his extraordinary talent, but also because he was the leader of a literary school which was a source of pride to Russia: "Gogol' vazhen ne tol'ko kak genial'nyi pisatel', no vmeste s tem i kak glava shkoly - edinstvennoi shkoly, kotoroiu mozhet gordit'sia russkaia literatura."[39]

By the end of the XIXth century a new literary movement had gained prominence in Russia, one which questioned the Belinskian

belief of Gogol as the quintessential Russian realist.

The Russian symbolist movement projected onto man's aesthetic faculty a philosophy of life which sought to enable him to understand his being, and by doing so, to find a remedy for his social ills. The symbolists attempted to analyse the dual nature of the world, and to establish man's role in the gradual spiritualization of the material world. For the symbolists, art was, in essence, a projection of the mind, and a unifying force, which can unite all the mind's separate aspects. As I. F. Annenskii, one of the representatives of Russian Symbolism stated clearly:

> Sozdaniia poezii proektiruiutsia v beskonechnom. Dushi pronikaiut v nikh otovsiudu, prichudlivo prolagaia po etim oblachnym dvortsam vechno novye galerei, i oni mogut bluzhdat' tam vekami, vstrechaias' tol'ko sluchaino.[40]

The symbolists attempted to re-evaluate Russian literary tradition, and, in doing so, they brought a fresh approach to the appreciation of Gogol's art. There were many aspects to this new critical approach, and it is useful to consider briefly the attitudes of some of the leading symbolists to Gogol.

D. S. Merezhkovskii, whose literary output reflected his view of

life and art as a symbolist, was famous for his belief that art was the handmaiden of religion. In Merezhkovskii's view Gogol represents a type of artist with one constant tragic theme.[41] In this connection Merezhkovskii stresses that the Devil stood at the centre of Gogol's life and work, and was, for Gogol, the manifestation of "bessmertnaia poshlost' liudskaia,"[42] which appears inevitably on every level of man's existence. Merezhkovskii's interpretation was understandable in the light of his own philosophical beliefs through which he attempted both to foster spirituality and religion among the Russian intelligentsia, and to win pre-eminence for his own views about them.

In man's life, as Merezhkovskii sees it, good and evil (God and the Devil) struggle for control over the soul. The smaller a man is spiritually, the greater the Devil seems to him:

> Gogol' pervyi uvidel nevidimoe i samoe strashnoe, vechnoe zlo ne v tragedii, a v otsutvstvii vsego tragicheskogo, ne v sile, a v bessil'i, ne v bezumnykh krajnostiakh, a v slishkom blagorazumnoj seredine, ne v ostrote i glubine, a v tuposti i ploskosti, poshlosti vsekh chelovecheskikh chuvstv i myslei, ne v samom velikom, a v samom malom.[43]

Gogol's characters are the representatives or, so to speak, the symbols

of polar archetypes which manifest themselves in man's consciousness.

One can already sense the genesis of the symbolist aesthetic insight in Merezhkovskii's analysis of Gogol's work, especially in his interpretation of Gogol's Revizor: the town exists in our spirituality, the officials are our passions, and Khlestakov is our deceiving conscience. Merezhkovskii goes so far as to discover a parallel between Khlestakov's fancies and the artist's power of invention, suggesting that for Khlestakov, as for any artist, what does not exist is more beautiful and therefore more true than truth itself.[44] In Khlestakov's personality we find again the symbol of the Devil, for he has the power to reduce anything noble or ideal to the lowest level of human consciousness. For Mertvye dushi Merezhkovskii finds this same evil manifested in Chichikov's desire for "acquisition" to which goal all morals and virtues are subordinated.

Merezhkovskii concludes that Gogol's tragedy, both in his artistic and personal life, arose from his constant struggle with the Devil, who proved to be unconquerable.

V. Ia. Briusov, a second representative of Russian Symbolism

also strongly denies the realism perceived by Belinskii and his followers in Gogol's art. On the contrary, Briusov believed that Gogol: "...ostavalsia mechtatelem, fantastom, i v sushchnosti, voploshchal v svoikh proizvedeniiakh tol'ko ideal'nyi mir svoikh videnii".[45] Briusov emphasizes the indigenous hyperbolic tendencies which are found both in Gogol's work as well as in his life. He believed that Gogol's art depicts only his own visionary world.[46]

Regardless of the theme Gogol is dealing with, argues Briusov, there is an omnipresent exaggerated imagery mixed with improbable circumstances: "... Dlia Gogolia net' nichego srednego, obyknovennogo, on znaet tol'ko bezmernoe i beskonechnoe."[47]

Gogol constantly mixes the fantastic and the real, so the possible can, at any moment, transform itself into the impossible, and there is ultimately no distinction between these two contrasting realms. Conversations and characters "... dovedeny do nepomernykh razmerov, slovno my smotrim na nikh v sil'no uvelichivaiushchee steklo."[48] Briusov sees these exaggerations and hyperbole not just as characteristics of Gogol's art, but of his life itself. Gogol's fantasies and illusions were always those of an extraordinary individual, and his

expectations were always higher than either the world or he himself could fulfil. His exaggerations encompassed not only his depictions of life's banality and absurdity, but are also evident in his depictions of beauty and ugliness.

Briusov compares the characters of Revizor with those of Poe's short story, "King Pest,"[49] with its charnel house grotesqueries and hideous distortions. Khlestakov and his companions resemble Poe's characters to a certain extent, argues Briusov, but while Poe concentrates on the physical signs of degradation and decay, Gogol describes a degradation of the spirit, which manifests itself in his characters' speech.

Just as with the ugly or the grotesque, Briusov also finds no restrictions in Gogol's portrayal of beauty, and, if we consider Katerina from "Strashnaia mest'," or the incarnation of beauty in "Nevskii prospekt," or Annunziata from "Rim," then these examples would validate Briusov's views. Whether one emphasises bodily or spiritual ugliness, Briusov finds examples of exaggerated, hyperbolized ugliness in such characters as Ivan from "Strashnaia mest'," the earthbound monster from "Vii" and Chertkov/Chartkov, the hero of "Portret."

Gogol's religious inclination was also stressed by Briusov, who claimed that this did not arise from a sharp change in his personality, but was the result of a constant growth and development from his youth onwards. For Briusov, Gogol's tragedy does not lie in the fact that he was unable to meet the demands of his religious convictions, an argument put forward by Merezhkovskii,[50] but was the result of the high mystical demands he made on himself. These demands became a torment for him, and when this tormenting force erupted, "...ona deistvitel'no ispepelila ego."[51]

Briusov's views are very similar to those of A. Belyi, another Russian symbolist, who takes the argument that Gogol did not represent Russian realism even further. Belyi believed that Gogol did not know reality, including the people who inhabited it, nor did he know the very ground on which he lived.[52] As a result of this, argues Belyi, Gogol lost the ground beneath his feet, and subsequently this ground existed for him only in his memories and visions. Belyi assigns to Gogol a romantic designation from the earliest stages of his career. Nevertheless, Gogol did move into other spheres in which there appeared in front of him : "ne liudi, a red'ki..., baran..., chernaia koshka

..., ili gusak, ne mir liudei, a mir zverei."[53] These are creatures whom, while they may behave as if they were human beings, it is impossible to regard as real under any circumstances:

> Gogol' zastavliaet eto zver'e ili rep'e... tantsovat' mazurku, odolzhat'sia tabakom, i dazhe bolee togo - ispytyvat' misticheskie ekstazy, i dazhe bolee togo - amfibii i reptili u nego pokupaiut chelovecheskie dushi.[54]

It is noteworthy that Belyi considers the human activities to be the least significant in this list. Gogol populated his landscapes with something resembling a human being, yet this being was essentially non-human and thus incapable of real human compassion. In attempting to determine Gogol's place in the evolution of Russian literature, Belyi argues that this is no mere school- book exercise:

> Gogol' genii, k kotoromu vovse ne podoidesh' s shkol'nym opredeleniem. Ia imeiu sklonnost' k simvolizmu - sledstvenno mne legche videt' cherty simvolizma Gogolia, romantik uvidit v nem romantika, realist - realista.[55]

Belyi's statement is both curious and significant in that it allows for each of the literary trends - in parallel - to qualify Gogol's art.

It would seem that Belyi does not question Merezhkovsii's

notions concerning Gogol's religiosity, but he approaches the origin of Gogol's spirituality from a new angle. Belyi believed that Gogol's religious despair was reflected both in his art as well as in his personality:

> ...uglubliaia svoiu khudozhestvennuiu stikhiiu, Gogol' vyshel za predely svoei lichnosti i vmesto togo, chtoby ispol'zovat' eto rasshirenie lichnosti v tseliakh iskusstva, Gogol' kinulsia v bezdnu svoego vtorogo "ia" - vstupil na takie puti, kuda nel'zia vstupat' bez... opytnogo rukovoditel'ia;[56]

In the overall, Belyi offered a fresh view both on Gogol and on his artistic and aesthetic devices. In doing so, he encouraged the emergence of the Formalist criticism of Gogol in the 1920s.[57]

After the symbolist re-evaluation of Gogol, new and diverse approaches concentrating on Gogol and his art came to the fore in the 1920's and 1930's.

R. A. Maguire in his lengthy introduction to a selection of twentieth-century criticism on Gogol, outlines the main areas of discussion.[58] He gives prominence not only to the symbolists, but also to the psychological interpretations put forward by D. N. Ovsianiko-Kulikovskii. Under the influence of Freud, whose works had,

by the 1920's, become familiar to the Russian intelligentsia, this line was further developed by I. D. Iermakov.

These critics, however, regarded Gogol as the representative of a psychological type, e.g. the "egocentric" (Ovsianiko-Kulikovskii), or the "anal" (Iermakov), and this resulted in reducing Gogol to an example of a psychological condition, rather than viewing him as a whole individual,[59] and, more importantly, as an artist.

The Russian formalists represent another leading group of critics. They insisted that literary studies should be carried out on a strictly "scientific basis," and that the artist's mind as well as his class biases should be disregarded.[60] Their approach to literature, i.e., their emphasizing that literary analysis is properly an analysis of literary features independent (at least initially) of other non-literary and linguistic disciplines, withered by the beginning of the 1930's and continued to develop only in emigration.[61] By the 1930's the Marxist line of criticism provided the only ideologically sound and approved basis for criticism.

An extreme line of Marxist criticism was that of V. F. Pereverzev, who argued that: "Bytie - eto tot sotsial'no-ekonomicheskii

protsess, kotoryi determinuet i zhitie liudei, i ikh soznanie, i poeticheskoe tvorchestvo."[62]

Accordingly, Gogol could not escape this law, which is, in Pereverzev's opinion, clearly delineated in Revizor and Mertvye Dushi. Pereverzev claims that these are Gogol's best works simply because he was familiar with his subject matter, i.e., with the world of the small land- and serf- owners:

> Vlianie etoi sredy na tvorcheskii genii Gogolia bylo, bez somneniia, naibolee znachitel'nym. Ved' eto byla blizkaia emu, rodnaia sreda, v kotoroi on rodilsia i vyros. Eta sreda vliiala na nego neposredstvenno; ona chut' ne s pelenok sluzhila dlia nego istichnikom zhivykh vpechatlenii.[63]

Pereverzev, as a good, convinced, somewhat one-sided Marxist, believes that it is environment alone which determines the person. In such theory literary influences are dismissed, for the artist is shaped solely by his socio-economic heritage and is incapable of depicting other people except through analogy:

> Gogoliu ne nuzhno bylo uchit'sia po knizhkam, potomu, chto elementy etogo byta on vpital v sebia do melochei s molokom materi. Sredi geroev-pomeshchikov on chuvstvoval sebia kak ryba v vode. A dlia togo chtoby napisat' povest' iz

> zhizni kazachestva, emu neobkhodimo bylo zaglianut' ne v odin foliant, tak kak inykh istochnikov i putiei dlia oznakomleniia s bytovymi elementami kazatskoi zhizni on ne imel. Estestvenno [v Tarase Bul'be, E.T.]..., Gogol'... tvoril c men'shim uspekhom, chem v povesti iz pomeshchichei zhizni.[64]

Pereverzev's argument about the dominance of enviroment could not have been accepted by most Marxist critics, for it would have meant that Russia's most significant writers and poets, e.g., Pushkin, Turgenev, Tolstoi etc., could never have been what they are claimed to be in the development of Russian literature due to their social background.

Between the 1930's and 1960's both Soviet literary criticism and Soviet literature itself was mainly tendentious, guided by the method and principles of Socialist Realism. Much scholarship appeared on Gogol's life and work, especially around the centenary of his death.[65] These works, however, were not of much significance, because they did not approach Gogol's art from a new light, but simply followed the beaten path of Belinskii.

Nevertheless, amongst the presently accepted Soviet views (especially from the early 1970's) their has been some improvement in the quality of Gogol criticism. Iu. Mann, for example, in his study

Poetika Gogolia attempted to interpret Gogol's art in a fresh light. While taking a formalist approach as a fundamental point of departure, he has succeeded in providing an analysis of Gogol's art in a most original manner. Instead of emphasizing the "realistic" nature of Gogol's work, he sees in Gogol the artist, who synthesized the most diverse elements of national life, and who had succeeded in depicting: "...chelovecheskuiu polnotu v ee komicheskom, grotesknom prelomlenii."[66] Mann's main concern is to follow Gogol's artistic, and to a certain extent aesthetic development, rather than drawing attention to his ideological outlook.

Just as Bakhtin had done in his revised work on Dostoevskii, Mann sees in Gogol's art a very close tie with the traditions of the carnival culture. While giving detailed analyses of the similarities between Gogol's work and the carnival traditions, he also shows through a series of examples how Gogol deviated from this tradition. Gogol in his Vechera..., had brought into that tradition's gaiety, cheerful carnival behavior, and overall dynamism, elements of sadness, fear, and a "mekhanicheskaiia imitatsiia zhizni."[67] In this Mann already foresees the "mature" Gogol of Mertvye dushi, wherein

"... momenty mertvennosti, avtomatizma, omertveniia - ves' kompleks motivov mertvykh dush" would reflect Gogol's inner world and artistic viewpoint.

According to Mann, Gogol's aim was to show the "chelovecheskaiia sushnost' (naznachenie) i real'noe sushestvovanie...."[68] Gogol saw between these two categories a deep void, for his characters had detached themselves from their own essential being and existed like marionettes, like "mertvye dushi." Mann sees Gogol's significance especially in an ability to show the "estrangement" of man from his own being as having universal validity in Russia of Gogol's time.

Clearly, 20-25 years ago such an approach would have not been accepted and published in the Soviet Union. Mann's Gogol study shows that, although the principles of the Stalinist critical legacy are still around, they are being challenged by different views and approaches.

II. V. G. Belinskii's Gogol Criticism and its Aftermath

German philosophical and aesthetic influence pervaded the Russian intellectual atmosphere of the 1830's and 1840's when Belinskii wrote his literary criticism. It is thus understandable that Belinskii should have been influenced by German aesthetic and philosophical thought.

Belinskii's aesthetic and philosophical development is generally divided into three major periods. During the first period, which covers the years 1832-36, he was influenced predominantly by the philosophy of Schelling, who argued that the universe is diffused with an eternal idea. Through the historical development of mankind this idea is directly manifested in each human being. It is thus the responsibility of the individual to express this particular apperception of the universe. While contingent upon differences in individuals, the comprehension of a universal etiology is, as such, the *sine qua non* for a person's existence in this universe. Schelling conceives of the course of history as a more or less continuous effluxion, which can be intuitively known. According to Schelling, the artist, in the sensitivity and singularity of his vision, is cognizant of the significance of the

historical instant, and thus the artist bears responsibility for helping to guide his own nation.

> The high position Belinskii assigned to the artist, whose power of intuition, expressed through unconscious creativity, made him the surest guide to truth, clearly derives from Schelling's ideas.[1]

One may agree with the author of this citation, for in reading Belinskii's first major article, "Literaturnye mechtaniia," it is obvious that Belinskii perceives literature and art to be the eminent expression of national life.

The most notable influence on Belinskii in the years up to 1842 was Hegel, chief protagonist of the German idealist philosophical movement in the first half of the 19th century.[2] Hegel's school arose from the disillusionment that followed the failure of the French Revolution to establish a free and just society through the instrument of political change. As a consequence of this failure the pursuit of freedom shifted from the practical to the theoretical, its arena being transformed from the domain of revolution (the practical) to the domain of philosophy and art (the theoretical). In Hegel's opinion real and genuine freedom is to be sought not in the material world, but in the world of the spirit evoked through philosophy and art, for it is

only here that the realization of freedom is truly possible. According to this theory the world is divided into two parts: the realm of visible appearances and the realm of the incorporeal which is materialized in philosophy and art. This incorporeal is only imperfectly manifested in the material world.

Belinskii, however, took the Hegelian concept of philosophy one step further. To him Hegel's thesis, that all that is is rational, was unacceptable, for such a proposition led to the conclusion that the existing social and political regime was rational - something that was decidedly unacceptable to Belinskii, who became increasingly committed to revolutionary change.

An important distinction between Schellingian and Hegelian theory is that according to the latter history can be understood by logical analysis rather than through intutitive mystification. Given the ability both to analyse history critically and to determine it, man can actively participate in the perfection of the ideal world, for the imperfect real world has the potential for embodying the ideal. The future is, from this point of view, more tangible than the present, for it is in touch with the historical process which moves from the real

world toward the virtual.

The influence of this theory is very clearly seen in Belinskii's critical work. Belinskii's dissatisfaction with the autocracy of Nikolai I made him want to act directly to change it. Through direct action he aspired to accelerate the arrival of a future in which man could draw nearer to a perfect world.

In this process Belinskii assigned a very significant role to the artist. From writers and men of letters especially, Belinskii demanded a complete and edifying illumination of the essence of national life. Moreover, it was the artist's responsibility to institute reform, either through educating the nation itself or by arousing dissatisfaction with the current social order. The relation of art to man's potential for historical progress becomes the plinth for all of Belinskii's later writings.

It is interesting to consider in detail Belinskii's criticism in order to appreciate his use of Gogol's work as a means to apply his realistic criteria to literature in general. His position is centered in the concept of activity and the individual's role in the moral and social struggles for the improvement of the human condition.

Gogol's appearance in Russian literature came at the beginning of the 1830's, but it was Belinskii in 1835 who first recognized Gogol's significance as a writer in a major way. In September of 1835 Belinskii's article, "O russkoi povesti i povestiakh g. Gogolia," based on Gogol's Arabeski and Mirgorod was published. It is one of the fundamental commentaries of the young critic on Gogol, the prodrome that establishes themes for the reflections of all his early articles on him, which will later be supplemented with additional analyses of particular writings by Gogol. From this time on Belinskii consistently interpreted Gogol's art in terms of his sovereign aesthetic and philosophical tenets.

In "O russkoi povesti..." Belinskii examines what he judges to be the cruces of the epoch, the question of the development of a contemporary national literature. He begins by comparing two types of poetry, idealistic and realistic. To Belinskii idealistic poetry does not answer immediate contemporary needs, but is merely a romantic and puerile misrepresentation of life.[3] On the other hand, realistic poetry can be described as:

> ... poeziia real'naia, poeziia zhizni, poeziia deistvitel'nosti, nakonets, istinnaia i nastoiashchaia

> poeziia nashego vremeni. Ee otlichitel'nii kharakter sostoit v vernosti deistvitel'nosti; ona ne peresozdaet zhizni, no vosproizvodit, vossozdaet ee i, kak vypukloe steklo, otrazhaet v sebe, pod odnoiu tochkoiu zreniia, raznoobraznye ee iavlenia, vybiraia iz nikh te, kotorye nuzhny dlia sostavleniia polnoi, ozhivlennoi i edinoi kartiny .[4]

Before proceeding to Gogol, Belinskii attempts an evaluation of contemporary Russian literature. He returns to the 18th century, but gives little credit to the writers of that era, for in his view they left very little in the way of a national mark on Russian literature. He does, however, admit the usefulness of sentimentalism as a rejuvenation from the barren path ~~of~~ what Belinskii called the *vek shkolastitsizma*.[5]

After giving a detailed account about the development of various literary genres (epic poem, fable, ballad, elegy, etc.), Belinskii argues that literature is witnessing a change from the dominance of the novel to the ascendancy of the long tale or *povest'* . In Belinskii's opinion it is the *povest'* which depicts most thoroughly and vividly life's contradictions:

> Ee forma mozhet vmestit' v sebe vse, chto khotite - legkii ocherk nravov, i kolkuiu sarkasticheskuiu nasmeshku nad chelovekom i obshchestvom, i glubokoe tainstvo dushi, i zhestokuiu igru strastei.[6]

In Belinskii's view, the passage from poetry to novel, to *povest'* has no association with the inner determinants of art, *per se,* but stems from the influence of a developing world literature, the spirit of the age. This transmutation is itself a result of the general demands of reality, or as Belinskii himself puts it: "...prichina v dukhe vremeni, vo vseobshchem, i mozhno skazat', vsemirnom napravlenii."[7]

After examining these developments Belinskii briefly analyses the role of Gogol's predecessors in the shaping of Russian prose. He discusses the prose of A. Marlinskii, V. F. Odoevskii, M. P. Pogodin, N. A. Polevoi and N. F. Pavlov, noting that in their prose style these writers came closer to authentic realism. They fell short, however, of the criteria established by Belinskii for realistic prose. It was Gogol alone who was successful in achieving the transition to realism in prose. The critical qualities which distinguished Gogol from these other writers were:

> prostota vymysla, narodnost', sovershennaia istina zhizni, original'nost' i komicheskoe odushevlenie, vsegda pobezhdaemoe glubokim chuvstvom grusti i unyniia... Gogol' - poet, poet zhizni deistvitel'noi.[8]

Belinskii draws attention to the ethos behind Gogol's work and delineates each of its distinguishing characteristics. It is worth

examining the lines of his argument.

He attempts to show the simplicity underlining Gogol's art, emphasising how the true artist, such as Gogol, is able to mirror the pearl contained in even the least significant subject matter. Belinskii believed that Gogol found poetry in the most banal facets of life, e.g., in the atmosphere of habit ("Starosvetskie pomeshchiki").

> No v tom-to i sostoit zadacha realnoj poezii, chtoby izvlekat' poeziiu zhizni iz prozy zhizni i potriasat' dushi vernym izobrazheniem etoi zhzni. I kak sil'na i gluboka poeziia g. Gogolia v svoei naruzhnoi prostote i melkosti! Voz'mite ego <<Starosvetskikh pomeshchikov>>: chto v nikh? Dve parodii na chelovechestvo v prodolzhenie neskol'kikh desiatkov let p'iut i ediat, ediat i p'iut, a potom, kak voditsia isstari, umiraiut. No otchego zhe eto ocharovanie? Vy vidite vsiu poshlost', vsiu gadost' etoi zhizni, zhivotnoi urodlivoi, karikarturnoi, i mezhdu tem prinimaete takoe uchastie v personazhakh povesti, smeetes' nad nimi, no bez zlosti.[9]

Furthermore, Belinskii underlines the significance of Gogol's ability to envision life in all its sundry aspects. Speaking of Gogol's *narodnost'* , Belinskii takes as his example the depiction of the entire cast of characters in Gogol's Arabeski and Mirgorod, and categorically states that if the representation of life is real, then it is, in essence,

narodnyi.

While it is possible to relate Belinskii's gradual interpretation of Gogol's art to his own aesthetic and philisophical doctrines on the development of social conditions in Russian society, it is often problematic to relate his interpretation to the essence of Gogol's literary art. Belinskii concentrated on the realistic element in Gogol's work. While focusing on the realistic content of the *povesti*, he ignores deeper images of the fantastic and the grotesque which contrast with, and arguably put into relief, Gogol's realistic settings. However, this confirms Gogol's significance and originality, but it does not set him apart as the exclusive "father of Realism." Indeed, through an examination of Gogol's literary devices it is possible to show that realistic theories about his works are usually misguided. He employed realistic features essentially as a framework for his hyperbolic representation of the habitual, everyday world.

Belinskii's interpretation of Gogol is more a passionate propaganda exercise than an objective exegisis of his talent. It is true that Belinskii recognised Gogol's talent, but he saw in Gogol the sum of his own literary and critical tenets, rather than the essence of Gogol's

art.

It is true that Gogol was a "realist" in so far as he introduced into his work, as details and materials, innumerable elements and aspects of reality which had hitherto been excluded from literature. He was a breaker of taboos, a destroyer of literary prohibitions, and he helped greatly to undermine the reign of the beautiful, which was replaced in his works with the dominance of *poshlost'*.

In other articles relating to Gogol Belinskii always uses the same argument - though he constantly refines and restates it - that literature should play an extremely active role in social life. In his "Russkaia literatura v 1842 godu"[10] Belinskii clearly states that Russian literature in the era of Nicholas I was the only means available for describing and thereby effecting social change. Belinskii contrasts the role of literature (as he perceives it) with that of the perception of the romantics. Belinskii, while recognizing the talent and acumen of the French romantics, is quick to point out that they did not have a lasting or deep influence on the social development of the period. He further argues that Russian romantics were able to clear a path through the classical heritage and thus lay the foundations for a

new and original literature. By original literature Belinskii means that which does not attempt a heightening of feelings and enlargement of facts, but one which shows life as it really is, warts and all.[11]

Whenever Belinskii finds something in Gogol which contradicts his own theories, his disapproval is always strongly pronounced. He believes that Gogol is an unerring portraitist of reality, but he does acknowledge that there are limits to Gogol's veracity. These limits, in Belinskii's opinion, become apparent when Gogol attempts to enter into philosophical discussion and scholarly dispute. These require a high level of intellectual development which Belinskii felt was lacking in Gogol.[12]

In keeping with Belinskii's pronunciations in favour of realistic literature, he considers the story "Strashnaia mest'" as a truly grotesque one, wherein Gogol's misunderstanding of the concept of *narodnost'* in art can be seen. He also sharply criticises ""Portret" for deviating from literary realism. In his examination of this story Belinskii was unwilling to accept the premise that man is prey to fate and chance. He demanded that Gogol show in his depiction of Chartkov's downfall the destructive power of avarice in the pursuit of

cheap success. Belinskii did not approve of "Nos" either, since the adventures of the nose take place in the realm of fantasy, a realm he, of course, held to be very alien to Gogol's true talent.

Mertvye dushi appeared at a time when Belinskii's views on the role of literature had fully formed. In a short time there were many different opinions expressed about Gogol's new work. Belinskii divided them into three major groups.[13] The first consisted of Bulgarin, Polevoi and Senkovskii, whom he believed had no critical worth since they were merely jealous of Gogol's success and would stop at nothing in their attempts to discredit him. Such a position is perhaps understandable in the light of Gogol's article, "O dvizhenii zhurnal'noi literature v 1834 i 1835 gody" in which he discusses literary journals of the day, and criticizes in particular those edited by Senkovskii, Bulgarin and Grech.[14]

The main agruments of the second group were expressed in K. S. Aksakov's article, "Neskol'ko slov o poeme Gogolia *Pokhozhdeniia Chichikova, ili mertvye dushi*" [15] which met with a strong polemical response from Belinskii. Aksakov argues that Mertvye dushi with its characters, content and poetical form, is a resurrection in Russian

literature of the tradition of the Homeric epos. The disappearance of this genre had led to the decay of contemporary literature, a decay now halted by the appearance of Mertvye dushi. Belinskii found this idea preposterous, for he believed that the Homeric epos was immutable and unrelated to historical conditions or movements of a later age. Literature, Belinskii believed, should not concern itself with the study of the past, but should look to its present and future relevance to society.[16] Belinskii opposed Aksakov's argument by asserting that while life was glorified in the Homeric epos, it is, in Mertvye dushi, shown as being negatively fragmented. This follows Belinskii's critical guidelines, for through its negative depiction of life as it really is, Gogol's work encourages dissatisfaction with the current social order.

Belinskii further argues that, while the Homeric epos has a universal cultural application, Gogol's work is restricted to Russia by the very nature of its subject matter. This polemic was continued in further articles[17] and Belinskii's convincing arguments and sarcastic tone won out, so his became the preeminent interpretation of Gogol, particularly in progressive literary circles and among the educated

reading public.

Belinskii felt that the publication of Vybrannye mesta iz perepiski s druz'iami[18] was an inexplicable aberration on Gogol's part. Since he could not fit this particular work into his overall scheme, Belinskii simply chose to ignore it. He said: "... velikoe znachenie Gogolia v russkoi literature osnovyvaetsia vovse ne na etoi 'Perepiske,' a na ego prezhnikh tvoreniiakh..."[19] In his article "Vzgliad na russkuiu literaturu 1847 goda" he continues to champion Gogol as the father of Russian realism, but only on the basis of his works before Vybrannye mesta iz perepiski s druziami.

Belinskii established Gogol as the measure of all new Russian literature for decades to come. Apollon Grigor'ev gives an accurate picture of Belinskii's relation to Gogol. He states that after Vechera na khutore bliz Dikan'ki, "Belinskii shel s Gogolem ruka ob ruku, tolkuia, poiasnaia ego, razlivaia na massy svet ego vysokikh proizvedenii."[20] Given this, it is easy to understand Belinskii's disappointment and feelings of betrayal following the publication of Gogol's Vybrannye mesta ... in 1847, after he had already established him as *the* literary paragon *par excellence*.

It should be noted of this work that Gogol's opinion of himself as the spiritual guide of the Russian nation caused a great furor amongst contemporary critics, who refused to take him seriously. It was only much later, i.e., in the 20th century, that some critics began to pay attention to Gogol's role in the development of Russian spiritual thought. For example, K. V. Mochulskii's study on Gogol attempts to defend his religious ideas, and he emphasizes the philosophical and spiritual elements in Gogol's work:

> Belinskii priznaet tol'ko vneshnie gosudarstvennye metody preobrazovaniia obshchestva, unichtozhenie krepostnogo prava, otmena telesnogo nakazaniia, izmenenie gosudarstvennogo stroia - u Gogolia vse metody vnutrennie, psikhologicheskie, perevospitanie dushi cheloveka... Psikhologicheskii put' Gogolia obuslovlen spiritualizmom vsego ego mirovozreniia. Dusha v tsentre mira, vse ot nee iskhodit i k nei vozvrashchaetsia. V nej kliuch' ko vsemu.[21]

Mochulskii traces Gogol's religious development from his early childhood to his death. From his interesting and very fascinating study it is possible to be persuaded of the viability of this particular point of view. Mochulskii's argument, however, is somewhat one-sided, since he is highly selective in his use of citations, excluding those which do

not answer his purpose.

His interpretation of Belinskii's reaction to Gogol's Vybrannye mesta ... deserves attention. Mochulskii finds that from the middle of the 1840's the Russian intelligentsia was slowly moving away from religion. The so-called *zapadniki*, among whom Belinskii, Gertsen and Bakunin had leading roles, tended toward a trend in Hegelian philosophy that was based on atheism and materialism.

> Perepiska Gogolia obnaruzhila, chto russkoe obshchestvo uzhe raspalos' na dva vrazhdebnykh lageria i chto razediniaiut ego ne stol'ko raspri politicheskie skol'ko problema o religioznom prizvanii Rossii.[22]

Mochulsky also believes that Gogol considered Russian culture and society to have a spiritual basis, and that Russia itself had a messianic role to play in the spreading of the Christian faith.

Gogol's Vybrannie mesta ... was an extreme blow for Belinskii. As a matter of fact, Gogol's renunciation of literature for preaching and prophecy astonished his contemporaries. Belinskii's famous letter and demonstration had, however, a tragic effect on Russia's sense of the loss of her destiny. Although Mochulsky admits that in Belinskii's reaction there is a certain pathos and good-natured sense of freedom

and humanity, he finds that it was essentially an attack upon religion. From here onwards, in the mind of the revolutionary intelligentsia autocracy and orthodoxy were indivisible.

It is generally acknowledged that Belinskii triumphed over Gogol. In the 1850's and 1860's this led to the appearance of a philosophical attitude which denied the spirit in favor of materialism. Mochulskii goes so far as to state that " ... nachalos snizhenie ideinogo urovnia, sumerki kul'tury."[23] However, the critic sees in Vybrannie mesta ... such a great significance that it could and did lead Russian literature off on the path to "nevedomye dali."

> Perepiska est' plod dolgoletnei, napriazhennoi nravstvennoi refleksii, bol'shogo dukhovnogo opyta. V nravstvennoi oblasti Gogol' byl genialno odaren: emu bylo suzhdeno kruto povernut' vsiu russkuiu literaturu ot estetiki do religii; sdvinut' ee s puti Pushkina na put' Dostoevskogo . . . S Gogolia nachinaetsia shirokaia doroga, mirovye prostory. Sila Gogolia byla tak velika, chto emu udalos' sdelat' neveroiatnoe: prevratit' pushkinskuiu epokhu nashei slovesnosti v epizod, k kotoromu vozvrata net i byt' ne mozhet. Svoim sviashchennym bezumiem on razbil garmoniiu klassitsizma, narushil estiticheskoe ravnovesie, chudom dostignutoe Pushkinym, vse smeshal, sputal, zamutil; podkhvatil vihrem russkuiu literaturu i pomchal ee k nevedomym daliam.[24]

After Belinskii the study of literature was to become a task as

important as the study of the reality it attempted to reproduce. According to most commentators, the condition of Russian literature was to become a barometer for the moral state of the nation.

Following Belinskii's death there were no momentous differences between critics until the middle of the 1850s. The first disagreements over the function of imaginative literature occurred between N. G. Chernyshevskii and A. V. Druzhinin who each attempted to put forward their own interpretation of literature and the proper path for its future development.

Druzhinin, in his Biblioteka dlia chteniia, began to question not only Belinskii's assesement of Gogol as a realist, but the strength of his critical worth in general.[25] He argued that imaginative literature should not be put to either social or political use. According to his analysis there are two types of imaginative writers, the artistic and the didactic. Druzhinin had little use for the didactic type. In his view the artistic writer's slogan is *art for art's sake*, and such a writer is unconcerned with the transitoriness of a given moment, for he concentrates on depicting the unchanging elements in human life, namely the concept of eternal beauty, good and truth. Such art need

have no direct contemporary relevance, is not directly beneficial to the writer's contemporaries, but, if it is relevant at all, then to all men.

The didactic writer, on the other hand, uses his artistic talent in the service of mankind at a given historical moment. Keeping constantly before his eyes the common good, he attempts to fulfil moral, political and scientific goals of great topical importance.

Druzhinin criticizes Belinskii for suggesting that it is only this didactic writer who has any value as an artist. He believed that Belinskii's legacy was not entirely beneficial to the development of Russian literature, though he did recognize that it was Belinskii, who first established the great significance of Pushkin and Gogol. Druzhinin also claims that, given Belinskii's total supremacy in literary criticism during the second half of the 1830's and 1840's, and the lack of any opposition to his views, there was a consequent loss of objective judgement on his part. Druzhinin believed that it was Belinskii's critical dominance which was responsible for over-emphasizing the importance of didacticism in Russian literature.

Druzhinin's Biblioteka dlia chteniia was a serious rival of Sovremennik, a journal which numbered Chernyshevskii and

Nekrasov amongst its contributors, and it was such writers who were to give it an increasingly utilitarian and radical slant.

Chernyshevskii's aesthetic and philosophical views were influenced by those of Feuerbach, who believed that mankind stands at the centre of the universe, and that everything is done by and for man. Chernyshevskii, however, substitutes the concept of *narod* (narod combining both the meaning of people and nation) for that of man, and places the *narod* at the centre of the universe.

Chernyshevskii also made a number of objections to Hegelian aesthetics, and he believed on the basis of his interpretations of Feuerbach's materialism, that the real world is superior to the world of ideas. For Chernyshevskii beauty was not an absolute, existing only in the world of the ideal, but something which was given shape and form in the real world. He held that the real world afforded examples of beauty more satisfying than those provided by any work of art. He thus argued for the superiority of real life over art, and he assigned three subordinate functions to art: to represent life as it really is; to explain it; and, finally, to judge it, i.e., to state or show how it ought to be.[26]

It is on the basis of these conditions that Chernyshevskii proceeded to analyse Gogol's work. He found that while Gogol could be said to depict real life in contemporary Russia, he did so in a fragmentary manner and failed to analyse and judge the situations he depicted and their causes. On the other hand, unlike Belinskii, Chernyshevskii did not consider Gogol's Vybrannie mesta ... to be such a tragic event. It was more a logical outcome of Gogol's whole life and artistic endeavour. Chernyshevskii believed that existence determines consciousness, therefore, to understand man, one must examine closely his milieu instead of looking for strictly personal intention and motivation. One can easily conclude from this that in Chernyshevskii's opinion Gogol's artistic outlook was formed by the society in which he lived.

By the end of the 1850's, however, Chernyshevskii was devoting himself mainly to historical and economical problems, and literary criticism in the Sovremennik was taken over by N. A. Dobroliubov, who continued to follow the line of criticism expounded by both Belinskii and Chernyshevskii. Their line of civic criticism may not have always prevailed, but it would survive until the Revolution,

after which it would be canonized by Soviet literary officialdom.

III. Gogol's Idealism in I. F. Annenskii's Views

As was mentioned in the introduction the first major opposition to V. G. Belinskii's realistic trend came from the symbolists at the turn of the century.

I. F. Annenskii was one of the representatives of Russian Symbolism. His approach to Symbolism, however, was crucially different from the approaches of other symbolists of his day. He was a classicist who enriched his classical studies with an appreciation of the aesthetic. In this way his own literary and critical output offers a synthesis of his scholarly and aesthetic views. His main characteristic was a concern for everything cultural, and this led to his developing the idea of the unity of culture and aesthetics. During his years as professor of language and literature (first in Kiev, and then in St. Petersburg), Annenskii placed great emphasis on aesthetics. He was already convinced that:

> Izuchenie proizvedenii dolzhno byt' tsentrom vsiakogo literaturnogo kursa. Proizvedeniia ne sut' primery dlia teorii slovesnosti ili illiustratsii dlia ee istorii, a samostoiatel'no izuchaemye

voploshcheniia poeticheskikh idealov.[1]

He did not approve of Merezhkovskii's religious approach, nor did he accept Blok's and Ivanov's symbolic mysticism. In his article "Chto takoe poeziia?", one can clearly trace Annenskii's orientation:

> Vmesto skuchnykh giperbol, kotorymi v staroi poezii uslovno peredavalis' slozhnye i neredko vydumannye chuvstva, novaia poeziia ishchet tochnykh simvolov dlia *oshchushchenii*, t. e. real'nogo substrata zhizni i dlia *nastroenii*, t. e. toi formy dushevnoi zhizni, kotoraia bolee vsego rodnit liudei mezhdu soboi, vkhodia v psikhologiiu s takim zhe pravom, kak v individual'nuiu psikhologiiu.[2]

The other main characteristic of Annenskii's work was, to borrow a term later used by V. I. Ivanov, that of "associative symbolism."[3] Ivanov argued that in the process of artistic creation, Annenskii did not associate his theme with one concretely defined phenomenon, but rather, in an effort to establish and to expand the universality of his statement, he used associative links, which give to the original denotee a much wider and more recognisable inner substance.

Annenskii, in the introduction to his critical work, establishes

the criteria by which he selected authors for criticism. He approached these prominent figures in Russian literature as he would a theme in his own poetry:

> Ia zhe pisal zdes' tol'ko o tom, chto mnoj vladelo, za chem ia sledoval, chemu ia otdavalsia, chto ia khotel sberech' v sebe, sdelav soboiu.[4]

Perhaps this is why he entitled his book Kniga otrazhenii, or The Book of Reflections, for he approaches his subject matter basically from a perspective which reflects his own subjective world. Thus, one finds a parallel reflection of the literary work in the consciousness of the poet and critic. It is the literary work that arouses the critic's philosophical and aesthetic judgement, which he then reflects back subjectively. However, Annenskii was not interested primarily in the work of art, but in its author, for, as he himself puts it: "Menia interesovali ne stol'ko ob'ekty i ne samye fantoshi, skol'ko tvortsy i khoziaeva etikh fantoshei."[5]

In the second book of his study, Annenskii again points to an aspect he will discuss further in his critical anlysis, namely that of the creative act as embodied primarily by the creator: "Problema tvorchestva, odno volnenie, s kotorym ia, podobno vam, ishchu

opravdaniia zhizni."[6]

Annenskii wrote only five articles on Gogol[7] - a small amount in comparison with that of Belinskii and other major Gogol critics. Qualitatively, however, they are extremely important in the way they consider Gogol's art by concentrating on: 1) realism in conjunction with the fantastic; 2) Gogol's essential idealism; 3) Gogol's aesthetic views.

Before beginning our examination of Annenskii's critical studies of Gogol's art, attention should be drawn to the similarities between their aesthetic perception of the world. They were both concerned with the harmonious relationship between man and the laws of beauty which was for them a perceivable reality. Annenskii's impressions and experiences in Italy were sometimes very similar to those of Gogol in the same place:

> It is impossible to describe the luxury, glitter and immensity... and together with that, this amazing harmony... you feel everywhere and in everything a sense of love, beauty and mind.[8]

Thus did Annenskii write from Rome.

Gogol, in his 1831-35 articles on aesthetics,[9] expressed his own views (however influenced by German aesthetic theory) on the nature

of beauty and its manifestations in human existence. For example, in his article, "Skul'ptura, zhivopis' i muzyka," he considered the meaning and nature of artistic creation in these three art forms, and assigned to sculpture the main role in acting as a manifestation of beauty:

> V prozrachnom mramore krasotoi, negoi i sladostrastiem, ona sokhranila odnu ideiu, odnu mysl': krasotu, gorduiu krasotu cheloveka... vsegda v nej chelovek iavliaetsia prekrasnym, gordym i nevol'no ostanovit atleticheskim, svobodnym svoim polozheniem.[10]

In further articles on art Gogol clearly showed that, in his view, the aim of art is to create an ideal of beauty which cannot be found in nature.[11] Gogol's and Annenskii's views are close in this respect. For both Gogol and Annenskii beauty is co-existant with harmony and virtue, but in Gogol's art it is in constant struggle with a disruptive evil. Similarly, the basic motif of Annenskii's poetry is the "feeling of anxiety for the beautiful, the feeling of the constant danger to beauty from [a] 'real' life."[12]

Given these similarities between Annenskii's and Gogol's aesthetic perception of art and the world, it may be easier to

understand Annenskii's interpretation of Gogol as an artist. For, whatever the particular approach used, Annenskii's elevated aesthetic outlook is evident, and it was he who first paid particular attention to aesthetics as an important means of better understanding Gogol and his art.

As mentioned earlier, Annenskii focuses on three major qualities in Gogol's work: - 1) the fantastic, occasionally expanded into the humorous; 2) idealism; 3) aesthetic perception. Annenskii proceeds by first introducing his own philosophical and aesthetic views, and then he tries to elaborate on them by using Gogol as his concrete example.

He devoted his first article on Gogol, "O formakh fantasticheskogo u Gogolia," to an examination of the blend of the fantastic and the real in Gogol's work. According to Annenskii the fantastic is that which does not and cannot exist. The real is its opposite and is typically depicted in art. There is, however, an intermixing of the real and the fantastic in art, since art "ne prosto *izobrazhaet* zhizn', a *raskryvaet*, ob'ektiviruia to, chto sovershaetsia v dushe cheloveka."[13]

In Annenskii's opinion:

> Sblizhennost' fantasticheskogo i real'nogo v tvorchestve osnovyvaetsia na tom, chto tvorchestvo raskryvaet vam po preimushchestvu dushevnyi mir, a v etom mire fantasticheskogo, sverkh"estestvennogo v nastoiashchem smysle slova - net.[14]

Thus, what we understand by the concepts of the real or the fantastic depends both on the aspect and on the subject from whose perspective they are being considered. As technology and science develop, the apparently fantastic may fit well within the laws of nature. Consequently, the fantastic remains fantastic only so long as it is unexplainable. The fantastic explained becomes the real.

Annenskii argues that the relationship between a work of art and the fantastic is of two types. The first is a naive relationship, which is mainly characterisic of folk literature, where all the events of the plot take place on a fantastic level. It should be noted here that Gogol put together the material for his Vechera na khutore bliz Dikan'ki from his research into Ukrainian folklore wherein the fantastic predominates. The second relationship between an artistic creation and the fantastic is the so-called *"uslovnoe otnoshenie,"* [15]

which varies depending upon the artistic purpose of the work - as examples of this *varying, conditional* fantastic, Annenskii offers the works of Homer, Ovid and Ossian/Macpherson. The writer can choose from any form of the fantastic in order to satisfy his purpose. The fantastic element can serve different purposes, it all depending upon the artistic goal.

Reality, argues Annenskii, is expressed in Gogol through *poshlost'*, which is perhaps best described as smug inferiority of both a moral and spiritual order.[16] According to Annenskii, the purpose of the fantastic in "Nos" is to make the reader aware of the banality or *poshlost'* within and around him.

In Annenskii's view there was an overwhelming desire on the part of Gogol (as there should be on the part of every writer), to convince the reader that he is right. Not only does he wish to convince the reader of the righteousness of his feelings, desires and ideals, but he also wishes his reader to undergo the same aesthetic experience as he himself had in creating his work. Gogol believed that this *poshlost"* and his attitude to it could best be depicted by means of the fantastic. In Annenskii's view Gogol uses the fantastic to enlarge and emphasize

his revelations about reality, for while the reader follows the fantastic adventures of the nose and its metamorphoses, he is also presented with a series of everyday banal events from the life of Kovalev, who is himself the personification of *poshlost'* :

> Poshlost' - eto melochnost'. U po'shlosti odna mysl' o sebe, potomu chto ona glupa i uzka i nichego, krome sebia, ne vidit i ne ponimaet. U poshosti net dobroty, net ideal'nykh stremlenii, net iskusstva, net boga.[17]

In order to illustrate his argument further, Annenskii turns to "Vii," a story by Gogol, which in subject and content is far removed from "Nos." Annenskii sees the fundamental psychological motif of "Vii" as being the fear of the unknown and the mystical. The appearance or arrival of death and the problem of life after death have always confronted man. Various images of death have produced an extremely powerful sense of fear in man when he has tried to understand it.

There is nothing especially extraordinary about Khoma Brut, but by putting him in an extraordinary situation Gogol enables the reader to view his personality from a different perspective. During his mysterious adventures Brut's attitude to the world around him

gradually changes. Initially, he behaved as if life were a merry prank, but as the story progresses, his fear develops and grows to such an extent that it eventually destroys him. In "Vii" Annenskii sees a perfect fusion of the two discordant elements of terror and humour, a wonderful blend of romantic incongruity and realistic comedy in which the fantastic is realised in the form of the mystical. Besides the mystical level, the comic and the fantastic also co-exist on the mundane level, or, as Annenskii puts it, on the level of the *bytovoe*.[18] In each case, however, Annenskii assigns to the fantastic a certain ethical relevance. In "Nos" its purpose is to point up *poshlost'*, in "Vii" to emphasize fear.

Later on, Annenskii returns to his analysis of "Nos" and emphasizes the comical side of the story. His approach is highly original, for he argues that the comic arises as a result of a desire on the part of the nose itself for revenge. This vendetta allegedly grows out of the nose's belief that it (should we say he?) had been slighted by the barber who treated it/him with insufficient respect. Justice is done, however, when the nose is restored to its/his rightful place, for it/he, now promotes feelings of fear and respect in the mind of the

hapless barber.

Fifteen years separate the two preceding articles, but Annenskii still stresses the ethical role of a work of art, i. e., the "moral'naia razviazka:"[19]

> Neuzhto pravda prekrasna tol'ko, kogda ona vozvrashchaet Liru ego Kordeliiu i Kordelii ee Lira? Razve, naprotiv, ona ne bessporno prekrasnee, kogda ona vosstanavlivaet neprikosnovennost', zakonneishuiu neprikosnovennost' obizhennomu, nezavisimo ot ego literaturnogo ranga, pust' eto budet sushchestvo samoe nichtozhnoe, samoe mizernoe, dazhe i ne sushchestvo, a tol'ko nos maiora Kovaleva?[20]

However, it is noticeable that now, fifteen years later, Annenskii approaches his work from a more aesthetic point of view. He can be seen as a symbolist aesthete when he argues that art has an all-embracing role which enables it to create a masterpiece from any level or topic of human existence.

In "Shinel'" Annenskii sees an ethical relevance in the figure of the avenging ghost whose purpose is to ensure that justice is finally done. The realistic side of the story tells the tale of the decline and fall of Akakii Akakievich, a pathetically humble and inferior figure.

Annenskii notes how, in recounting the destruction of Akakii Akakievich's life's dream, the narration passes through a whole range of attitudes towards him, from straightforward mockery to poignant pity.

In order that justice may finally be done for Bashmachkin, his superior must realise, however briefly, that he is the representative of *poshlost'*. To do this, Gogol turns to the fantastic.

Annenskii was able to establish a legitimacy for the synthesis of the real and the fantastic in Gogol's work. He agrees that the fantastic denies reality, but qualifies this by stating that reality is necessary only for life. Art comes close to life, not through the representation of reality, but through truth, i.e. in distinguishing between good and evil, or as Annenskii puts it:

> ... deistvitel'nost' est' neobkhodimaia forma tol'ko dlia zhizni. Iskusstvo sblizhaetsia c zhizn'iu vovse ne v deistvitel'nosti, a v pravde, t. e. v razlichenii dobra i zla.[21]

In the creation of this truth, continues Annenskii, the fantastic can play just as great a role, if not, indeed, a greater one, than represented reality.

In his analysis of Gogol's short stories Annenskii does not look for any social messages, though at this point in his critical development, the ethical basis of the tales is given much attention. As Annenski's criticism deepens, ethical questions and aspects diminish in importance.

Annenskii's fascination with the effect of art on man is shown in his analysis of Gogol's "Portret." Just as in many other articles, he first establishes his own particular views on the subject. Annenskii thought that at a certain level the creative spirit of the artist may conquer the material from which it was fashioned. In so doing the artist goes beyond the material to create a masterpiece which stimulates in the appreciative reader feelings and emotions similar to those which he himself experienced during the creative process. As we have seen, this argument has already been expressed by Annenskii in an earlier article, but it is worth stressing that his assigning such a high role to the artist and his work, as well as his repeated emphasis of this point, recalls Schelling's opinion of the role of the artist, though from a different perspective - Schelling's being historical, Annenskii's aesthetical.[22] Annenskii had the strong conviction that a true work of

art, by means of its intellectual characteristics, is able to inspire the highest level of aesthetic feeling in man.

Annenskii sees in Gogol two different methods of depicting nature. One is a mere slavish or mechanical imitation, which, according to Annenskii, has no legitimate existence. As an example of an appropriate, non-slavish approach, Annenskii shows how the early Chartkov did not imitate nature, but invented it and attempted to add on his own inimitable touches. The second depiction of nature is the aesthetic, which must include the totality of the artist's personality in the depiction of nature, the symbiosis of the artist's intellect and the object depicted. In the case of the painting of the old moneylender it was nature, in its unfathomable qualities, which conquered the artist through its "...esteticheskaia nerazreshimost'."[23] Interestingly, Annenskii draws a parallel between the old usurer and Gogol himself, who created fictional characters which dominated and eventually destroyed him.

Annenskii's symbolist view is evident in his interpretation of "Portret." The painting itself may have disappeared, i.e. the material side of the work of art disappears at the story's end, but there still

remains its significance, which, by means of the symbolic power of the word brings about feelings and effects in man's consciousness according to his aesthetic capacity to perceive.

It is interesting how Annenskii compares such seemingly different characters as Chartkov, Khlestakov and his companions, and the characters of Mertvye dushi. In his article, ""Portret," Annenskii begins his argument by stating that: "Literaturnye izobrazheniia imeiut kak by dve storony."[24] One of these sides, explains Annenskii, is revealed to the reader, but the other is imperceptible, though inseparable from the first. This second side exists only within the inner experience of the artist. There is a contact between these two sides which can be compared to the relationship between a psychological act and the world within which it is made manifest, for "...i v tom i v drugom sluchae est' lish' sosushchestvovanie, a ne vnutrennee srodstvo."[25] However, while the external side of a literary type carries within itself the possibility to produce the same emotional experiences in the reader as the artist himself feels, the word itself through which the character is being depicted, has only a conventional relationship to thoughts. The external side of a character

could elicit the reader's laughter, while, according to Annenskii, a writer may well have a totally different intention.

Gogol's tragedy is that the characters he created in his tormented imagination were seen by his readers as merely funny objects of laughter, this having been especially the case for Revizor and its cast of characters.

Gogol, however, was horrified by the characters he had created since they revealed a world devoid of sense and harmony. In Annenskii's words: "Gogol' ne tol'ko ispugalsia glubokogo smysla vyvedennykh im tipov, no, glavnoe, on pochustvoval, chto nikuda ot nikh uiti uzhe ne mozhet.[26]

Annenskii believed that by the time Gogol came to write "Portret," he had a hopeless and pessimistic attitude towards life. While drawing a parallel between "Nos" and "Portret," Annenskii sees in the first the representation of man's physicality, in the second his spirituality. In comparing Kovalev and Chartkov one feels, be it only for a moment, the absurdity and impossibility of man's existence. Annenskii saw Gogol's gloomy and discouraged attitude, as evident in "Portret," to have been a result of his growing disenchantment with

idealism.

Annenskii, however, expresses some doubts as to the appropriatness of his own way of interpreting Gogol's art:

> A ved' mozhet byt' i to, chto zdes' proiavilsia vysshii, no dlia nas uzhe ne dostupnyi *iumor tvoreniia*, i chto muchitel'naia dlia nas zagadka cheloveka kak nel'zia proshche reshaetsia v sfere vysshikh kategorii bytiia.[27]

Annenskii, in commemeration of the 50th anniversary of Gogol's death, gave a speech, which was published in 1902. This speech can be viewed as a summary of Annenskii's views on Gogol. Therein he emphasizes that Gogol's influence was felt both by his own and future generations despite the fact that, in terms of output, Gogol was not a prolific writer. He argues that Gogol's idealism was the main reason he had such an influence, and it is for this reason that Annenskii chooses this idealism as the main theme of his speech.

His starting point is that of idealistic philosophy, according to which man is surrounded by two worlds, the world of objects and the world of ideas. It is man alone who can attempt to unite these two worlds. Man's *essential* being is determined by just how close he can bring himself to the world of ideas:

> Ta oblast' zhizni, gde veshchi naibolee pokoreny ideiami i gde ideal'nyj mir zakhvatyvaet nas vsego polnee, blagodaria tomu, chto on zakliuchen lish' v obmanchivuiu, *simvolicheskuiu* obolochku veshchestvennosti... nazyvaetsia iskusstvom.[28]

Annenskii's statement suggests that each human being should have as his aim a striving towards the ideal, but it is art, especially verbal art, which has this striving as its quintessential quality and purpose: "Iz vsekh iskusstv poeziia iavliaetsia samym obrazovatel'nym, i ona tesnee vsekh sviazana s umstvennoi i nravstvennoi zhizn'iu cheloveka;"[29]

Annenskii further expounds his views by drawing attention to the materialistic and idealistic sides of poetry. He sees the idealistic as constantly changing, both in time and space, while the materialistic remains constant.

He is convinced that Gogol's characters have managed to survive, because they are representatives of this idealistic trend, i.e., they are symbols of Gogol's own ideals. Any contemporary perception of the ideal or non-material in Gogol's art is conditioned by the changes which have taken place in the interpretation of his art since his own time. Gogol's idealism developed gradually and in well defined

stages. In the Vechera... the demonic appears in the world of beauty symbolised by peasant life in the Ukraine. Though Gogol's treatment is folkloric, each of the stories can be seen as having as its base the theme of the intrusion of the demonic into the realm of the beautiful, where it attempts to destroy harmony. This demonic intrusion is at this point, however, less than frightening, for the events occur within the framework of the folk tale.

Annenskii sees the next step in the development of Gogol's idealism as being the portrayal of love, which already contains within it Gogol's perception of a frightening power for the disintegration of harmony and ideal love. This might be seen in Taras Bul'ba where Taras's love for his homeland is in Annenskii's words not just heroic and grand, but also cruel: "...liubov, konechno, i geroichna, i velichestvenna, no Gogol' ne skryl ot nas vsei zhestokosti ee velichiia."[30]

In "Vii" and "Portret" Annenskii finds that evil is already totally victorious. "Vii" is, for example, the conceptualisation of the earthbound and purely physical nature of man, the embodiment of passions untied to moral and intellectual restraints. The struggle

between Khoma Brut and the witch is a symbol of the struggle between the worlds of good and evil. This climaxes in the contrast between the events of night and day.

Annenskii's final article on Gogol was "Estetika *Mertvykh dush* i ee nasledie," which can be regarded not only as Annenskii's view of the epitome of the aesthetic approach in a work of art, but also as Gogol's final confession of his earlier emphasis on the ethical role of an artistic work.

Annenskii begins his argument with a discussion of man's dual nature. There are two persons in man, he argues. One is tangible and realiable in voice, colour, pose, movement, size, laughter, etc.; the other is a mystery which carries within itself an indivisible and incommunicable selfhood. The first person eats, sleeps and functions in an everyday environment, but it is only the second which can respond to moral demands. In Annenskii's opinion Gogol destroyed the connection between these two sides of man's being and this resulted in an astonishing dominance of the physical over the indivisible selfhood. Moreover, the intangible is completely vanquished, and thus the predominantly physical reigns supreme in Gogol's literature - and

relishes in its total victory.

Man's physical character becomes so dominant that even the normal human shape is changed into grotesque imitations of a normal part of the body. One does not regard a Gogolian character as a human entity, but sees him in terms of the partial, as hair, lips, eyebrows, odour, stomach, etc, and this, Annenskii argues, elicts fear and loathing in the reader.

In this process Annenskii sees a self-sacrifice on Gogol's part, for Gogol felt the need to show, at great personal cost, the abyss which separates the ideal and physical worlds. It was Gogol who took a major step towards the depiction of the physical, and in doing so, he emphasized meaning instead of form, thereby creating true art:

> Chto by bylo s nashej literaturoj, esli by on *odin za vsekh nas* ne pod"ial kogda-to etogo *bremeni* i etoi *muki* i ne okunul v *bezdonnuiu telesnost'* nashego stol' eshche robkogo, to rassuditel'nogo, to zhemannogo, pust' dazhe osiianno-vozdushnogo pushkinskogo slova.[31]

Annenskii's statements in his earlier article, "Chto takoe poeziia?" could also be related to his analysis of Gogol when he stresses that he has no desire to impose his interpretations on others.

In his views on Gogol Annenskii sought only to give voice to his own impressions, which are based both on his studies of and reactions to Gogol's art.

As a final remark, Annenskii stresses Gogol's all-embracing influence on the generation following the so-called "Gogol-period," for Gogol's work continued to live during the succeeding decades. Writers learned from Gogol and followed in his path by adding new content and nuances to the Gogolian heritage. Thus Dostoevskii's Makar Devushkin already demands sympathy and forgivness for himself; Goncharov learned from Gogol how to see things; Ostrovskii learned how to listen to the people; and Pisemskii changed Gogol's aesthetic sensitivity into cynicism.

While admitting that the people were frightened of Gogol's characters, Annenskii sees Gogol's significance in leaving behind:

> ...dve zavetnykh, gogolevskikh mysli. Pervaia - ia budu sam soboiu. Vtoraia - ia budu liubit' odnu zagadku, tol'ko odnu, tu, s kotoroi ia rodilsia, zagadku moei rodiny.[32]

IV. Vasilii Gippius on Gogol's Three Idylls

Around the time when Formalism was locked in its losing battle with Marxist criticism, V. V. Gippius began to publish on Gogol's art. After some attempts at writing poetry and translating such writers as Horace, Novalis, Molière, Tieck and Heine, Gippius devoted his life to scholarly pursuits and criticism of nineteenth century Russian literature, and of Gogol in particular.[1] His major works on Gogol were published between 1924 and 1936, but it is his first work, entitled Gogol (1924), which ensures him a prominent place in Gogol scholarship.

As was mentioned earlier, it is very significant that Gippius does not attempt to interpret Gogol one-sidedly in this book. In his foreword he clearly expresses this:

> Protivorechie mezhdu Gogolem-realistom i Gogolem-romantikom, Gogolem-oblichitelem i Gogolem-reaktsionerom, Gogolem-iumoristom i Gogolem-propovednikom ne ustraneny i etimi rabotami . . . voprosy skoree staviatsia, chem reshaiutsia."[2]

In his later works, however, Gippius, in an attempt to trim his literary sails to the prevailing political and ideological wind of the

1930's, does a complete *volte-face* on his earlier opinions of Gogol's art.[3] According to G. M. Fridlender, "V. V. Gippius schital ego [his first study of Gogol] ustarevshim i s metodologicheskoi i s faktichеskoi tochek zrenii."[4]

However, Fridlender avoids mentioning that aside from the criteria he cited there is a third one of no less significance, the ideological approach to Gogol's art. For Gippius begins his study, "Tvorcheskii Put' Gogolia" with cliches reflecting the current Soviet ideology:[5]

> V mesto Pushkina Gogol' iavilsia osnovo-polozhnikom kriticheskogo realizma v russkoi literature. Imia Gogolia bylo znamenem revoliutsionnoi Rossii . . . V glukhie gody krepostnicheskogo nikolaevskogo rezhima Gogol' s strashnoi siloi oblichal pomeshchikov, tsarskikh chinovnikov i priobretatelei.[6]

It is hard to believe that Gippius could have undergone such a total ideological change in less than a decade. Since Gippius was offered and took a position at the "Pushkinskii Dom" in 1932, and was later appointed to a professorship at Leningrad University, these changes were, at the very least, systemic and were probably due more to expediency and the desire to survive than to a genuine

re-evaluation of his literary values. This helps to explain why Gippius' more blatant *volte-faces* align themselves with the tenets of Socialist Realism. In the 1920's, however, Gippius had provided a highly objective view of Gogol's art, one that was untrammelled by political considerations.

Gippius, in a most original manner, divides Gogol's artistic development into periods which he labels "idylls." These idylls are, in his opinion, closely linked to personal and artistic turning points in Gogol's life. The idylls are synonymous with the life-style of the small land-owner. While emphasizing that this was Gogol's heritage, Gippius believes that Gogol himself remained unaware of the power of its influence. The more Gogol tried to break away from this indigenous influence, the more he fell under its sway. It was in this way, Gippius suggests, that the dramatic antagonism which may be traced throughout the course of Gogol's life was created. This "bytie theory" forms the only common ground between Gippius and Pereverzev.[7] However, this theory forms the latter's whole argument, while Gippius feels that it is important to examine more extensive sources and influences which helped to shape Gogol's art. He believes that

Gogol's work is better understood if placed in a well-defined literary and historical perspective. In this Gippius shared in the thinking of the formalists and others close to them.

Gogol's first idyll, according to Gippius, was that of a small, provincial, dilettante land-owning family, one whose outlook might best be viewed as semi-religious. While trying to trace Gogol's religious "Weltanschauung," Gippius emphasizes (already at the beginning of his study) that Gogol's youthful religious experiences were only the result of the superficial and external manifestations of the church, experiences which did not satisfy Gogol, and toward which he had a critical attitude. Gippius cites an 1833 letter from Gogol to his mother to illustrate the allegedly superficial, spectacle-based nature of Gogol's *piety* in these early years:

> Vnushite ei (sestre) pravila religii. - Eto fundament vsego. - Eto nemnogo tozhe sdelaet dobra, esli ona budet besprestanno khodit' v tserkov'. Tam dlia ditiati tozhe vse neponiatno, ni iazyk, ni obriady. Ona privyknet gliadet' na eto, kak na komediiu.[8]

Gippius' evidence, however, hardly supports a case for Gogol being negatively disposed to religion and does not accord well with the religiosity of Gogol's later years.

Gippius believed that Gogol's development was especially shaped by his father's work as a writer, and that many of the elder Gogol's sources and techniques were to be incorporated into his son's later artistic achievements.

For Gippius, Gogol is a highly emotional, egocentric individual who was, even in the provincial and mediocre atmosphere of his early school years in Nezhin, becoming aware of his unique potential as a writer. Additionally, however naively and paradoxically, Gogol was already becoming convinced that his life's work in the government service would bring him fame because of its importance. This vision of heroic government service can be seen as the result of Gogol's youthful ideals and strange egocentric personality.[9] Of course, Gogol's vague grandiose fantasies were immediately dashed upon his arrival in St. Petersburg where government service eluded him, and his literary debut brought him only bitter disappointment.

Gogol's hero in his first published work, Gants Kiukhel'garten, lives a quiet and happy life, but he is tormented by dreams for which he gives up his idyllic existence, only to settle for a compromise in a remote provincial milieu. However stereotyped the literary basis for

Gants' ultimate decision, Gippius finds that this work reflects Gogol's own personality, for it was Gogol himself who was trying to find an answer to the question:

> Ne luchshe l' v tishine ukromnoi
> Po poliu zhizni protekat',
> Sem'ei dovol'stvovat'sia skromnoi
> I shumu sveta ne vnimat'?[10]

The answer is yes, it is "luchshe," and Gippius believes that Gogol returns to his idyll over and over again, for it would seem from Gogol's biography that, after his first defeat in Petersburg, he was unable to come to terms with the urban world around him. This idyll, according to Gippius, represented for him a refuge to which he could escape in times of crisis.

The failure of Gogol's early ambitions after his arrival in St. Petersburg came at a time when the question of the nature of Russian national identity was assuming paramount importance. Attention was now being focused on the past and its traditions, and a heightened interest in folk literature was emerging. Gippius gives a detailed account of the folklore of the Ukraine, which such men of letters as the poets N. A. Markevitch, M. A. Maksimovitch and the critic-writer O. M. Somov had already began to collect and publish.[11] Given his

background, it is perhaps then not altogether accidental that Gogol himself was influenced by the renewed interest in Little-Russian or Ukrainian folklore. Consequently, after the destruction of his hopes for a career in the public service, he could find solace and inspiration in the rediscovery of his native Ukrainian roots.[12]

Gippius considers that Vechera na khutore bliz Dikan'ki is the outcome of this revival of folklore, and he stresses Gogol's originality in combining elements from Ukrainian comedy, e.g. anecdotes and puppet plays, with the traditions of folk literature. Gippius is convinced that Gogol had learnt much from his father about the nature of Ukrainian comedies, which

> ...vyrosli iz traditsii anekdoticheskikh tipov i anekdoticheskikh brodiachikh motivov, kotorye razlichnym obrazom otrazilis' i v otzhivshikh uzhe interliudiiakh, i v bytovavshem eshche ukrainskom vertepe, i v pervoosnove vertepa - narodnykh anekdotakh, skazkakh, pesniakh, i, nakonets, cherez ikh posredstvo, v pisannoi ukrainskoi literature, v pervoi chetverti 19-go veka, kak raz ozhivivsheisia.[13]

And, all the while Gogol adhered to the tenets of Russian romantic literature. Gippius argues that Gogol's literary formation was further expanded by Gogol's familiarity with the German romantics. In

particular, Gippius notes the importance of L. Tieck and E. T. A. Hoffman, who combined images of the demonic with a sense of man's tragic fate.[14]

As for Vechera ... specifically, Gippius admits that it contains certain features based on religion. However, he argues that the intrusion of the demonic and the exposure of the devil, disguised in human form, appear in terms of myth and church ritual, but not as an expression of Gogol's own religious experiences. About Gogol's own religious inclinations he is cautious in stating that: "... o lichnom mirovozrenii Gogolia v eti gody net dannykh sudit'."[15]

Gippius perceives all the stories in Vechera ... as variations on a single theme, that of the demonic incursion into human existence and the continual battle against this force which gradually gains in strength as the struggle progresses. The process of how the demonic develops, from its initial absence to its eventual omnipresence in Gogol's Vechera ... is accurately described by Gippius. From the stories, "Sorochinskaia iarmarka" and "Ivan Fedorovich Shpon'ka i ego tetushka," which contain almost no evidence of the demonic, there is a shift into minor devilry in "Propavshaia gramota" and

"Zakoldovannoe mesto." In the love stories, "Maiskaia noch, ili utoplennitsa" and "Noch pered rozhdestvom," the contest between light and darkness becomes much more fierce, and the pinnacle is reached when the demonic gains the upper hand in such stories as "Vecher nakanune Ivana Kupala" and "Strashnaia mest'."[16]

Gippius expresses doubt about the realistic element in these stories:

> . . . dolzhny byt' ogranicheny utverzhdeniia, chto v izobrazhenii, po krainei mere, starshego pokoleniia - Gogol' realistichen (Kotl[iarevskii], Perv[Pereverzev]). Uzhe v *Vecherakh* namecheny budushchie giperbolicheskie karikatury Gogolia, poka v sil'noi zavisimosti ot ukrainskoi komicheskoi traditsii.[17]

Gippius believes that by following the dictums of the romantic school Gogol sought intuitively to depict an artistic rather than a natural reality, and he sees in caricatures of Vechera ... the typical romantic characters of both foreign and domestic provenance.[18]

During the period between Vechera ... and Mirgorod (1831-35), Gogol was busy not only with fiction but also with articles on aesthetics. His aesthetic self-awareness developed and strengthened, and aestheticism became a pre-dominant concern of his, as can be seen from his collection Arabeski, published at the beginning

of 1835.[19] Gippius analyzes Gogol's articles on aesthetics as a unified literary whole, which gives an accurate picture of Gogol's aesthetic beliefs from 1831 to 1835.[20]

In "Skul'ptura, zhivopis' i muzyka," Gogol defines sculpture, painting, and music, the three branches of the fine arts as: "tri prekrasnye tsaritsy mira."[21] Because of its ability to illuminate an ideal and liberate mankind from the confines of everyday life, Gogol ascribes to music the highest value, and considers it intrinsically necessary for the world.[22] Here Gogol reflects the aesthetics of the German romantics for whom music was the highest manifestation of art. As Gippius puts it: ".. . muzyka, unosiashchaia ot zemli v inye miry, byla dlia nikh sovershenneishim iskusstvom.[23]

Gogol assigns a very high place to sculpture and painting as well, for they show the creation of ideal beauty in mankind. In his article "Poslednii den' Pompei" he sees painting as being of equal stature with sculpture. Considering Briulov's art, Gogol states: "U Briulova iavliaetsia chelovek dlia togo, chtoby pokazat' vsiu krasotu svoiu, vse verkhovnoe iziashchestvo svoei prirody."[24]

In his overall analysis of Gogol's aesthetic development, Gippius

assigns great importance to the influence of German romantic aesthetics, according to which: "iskusstvo bylo sverkhchuvstvennym otkroveniem chistoi beskonechnosti, iazykom, na kotorom chelovek govorit s bozhestvom."[25]

In his 1831 article, "Zhenshchina," Gogol gives vent to similar views, although he does not yet speak of artistic beauty, but tries to express the spiritual divinity of female beauty:

> Chto zhenshchina? Iazyk bogov! . . . Ona poeziia! Ona mysl', a my tol'ko voploshchenie ee v deistvitel'nosti. Na nas goriat ee vpechatleniia, i chem sil'nee i chem v bol'shem ob"eme oni otrazilis', tem vyshe i prekrasnee my stanovimsia.[26]

According to Gippius, this ideally beautiful woman is evident in the depiction of the Cossack's daughter in "Vii," although she is already being infiltrated by demonic powers and brings ruin to the people around her (but then this, too, is consistent with the essay's terming woman the demonic creature of Zeus.)

Gippius finds that the most recurring theme in Gogol's work of this period (1831-35) is the tragic fate of beauty, the world's highest value. In "Nevskii prospekt" and "Vii" the beautiful is represented by its female manifestation. However, because this beauty is spoiled (in

"Nevskii prospekt") the artist, for whose consciousness it was so vital, also perishes, for man's aesthetic sense is unable to survive the destruction of his ideal. Gippius even goes so far as to call Piskarev the first decadent of Russian literature, since he chooses imagination over reality: "Otritsaia deistvitel'nost vo imia voobrazheniia, Piskarev pitaet svoe voobrazhenie narkotikami i etim predskazyaet dal'neishie puti i pereput'ia esteticheskogo illuzionizma v Evrope ."[27]

In "Portret" Gippius further develops his aesthetic argument by claiming that demonic forces are out to destroy beauty as embodied in artistic creation. It seems that the way Gogol explores his own aesthetic views in this story puzzles Gippius, who was unable to fit it neatly into his overall plan, and found in it elements which disagreed with a uniform interpretation. Gippius admits that the story introduces the presence of a universal demonic/demonicheskoe, which: " dolzhno byt' pobezhdeno vo vsem mire - kak mirovoe zlo."[28] He also recognizes in Gogol an emerging religiosity, but only in so far as it is dependent upon an appreciation of the aesthetic. It is somewhat contradictory that, while Gippius has downplayed the religious content of Gogol's work for this period, his concluding

remark: "esteticheskoe soznanie . . . uzhe zadevaet sosednie sfery psikhiki,"[29] is clearly relatable to religion (through its association with Father Grigorii, the artist who struggles with the the demon in an attempt to overcome world evil.)

In "Vii," "Nevskii Prospekt" and "Portret" Gippius sees a link with Vechera ... and Gogol's aesthetic articles. The presence of the mystical and the supernatural, as well as the use of elements associated with Ukrainian puppet plays, establish an affinity with Vechera.... Gippius' argument is based on Gogol's writings on aesthetics having been more or less contemporary with the appearence of the Vechera ... and Mirgorod collections. However, he also notes the distinction between the two works, for in Vechera ... it is man's life which is invaded by the demonic, but in Mirgorod the beautiful itself is threatened.

In Vechera ... the comic is constantly intertwined with the demonic. A duality of theme and mood dominate the cycle, and this is already evident from the first story, "Sorochinskaia iarmarka," whose ending is marked by a sudden lapse into sadness. In "Vii" and "Nevskii Prospekt," however, the comic mixes with situations which are

fundamentally tragic. In Gippius' opinion this device of contrast has its roots both in Gogol's individualism and in a dualism inherent in the late romantic tradition. Therein, the existential world and its inhabitants were low and ugly (and comic) by comparison with the artist and his ideal creations.[30] Additionally, Gippius considers that Gogol's dualism results from his ambivalence to the cultural and social mores of his day.[31]

This was already evident in "Gans Kiukhelgarten" who, despite his high, albeit vain aspirations, decides to return to the world from which he had tried to escape. The world in question is that of the small landowners in "Starosvetskie pomeshchiki" which, according to Gippius, represented Gogol's second idyll, and the apogee of that vein in his works.[32] Gippius regards this story, with its bucolic small-landowner society, as Gogol's own idealized refuge, an escape from his own struggle which found expression in his works as a battle against the intrusion of the demonic into the realms of everyday life and beauty.

This idealized world of the mid-1830's, Gippius emphasizes, has no ideological basis, and it cannot be regarded as foreshadowing

Gogol's later aesthetic and philosophical views which *will* be ideologically grounded. For Gippius it is simply a question of Gogol being still very strongly attached to those social and cultural roots from which he was also desperately attempting to escape.[33]

Gippius finds that when Gogol moves the settings of his stories to contemporary St. Petersburg, the latter appears in an unreal light: "Impressionisticheskie obrazy samoi priblizitel'nost'iu ochertanii priblizhaiutsia k karikature, otkuda nedaleko do fantastiki."[34] Gippius emphasizes that Gogol, in his Petersburg stories and in his plays, introduces plots, characters, and situations which were not dealt with in the earlier Vechera ... stories. This new line concentrates on the officialdom of St. Petersburg and then spreads to include that of the Russian provinces.

Among the stories which have civil servants as their main characters, one of the central themes is that of insanity induced by ambition. In an unfinished work, "Vladimir 3-i stepeni," Gogol describes a character whose insanity is the direct result of his ambition, which in this case is his desire to obtain an award. His insanity reaches such a height that his own personality is swallowed

up by the physical presence of this *orden* and he ceases to exist. Kovalev in "Nos" represents the lowest level of humanity, for he lacks even the smallest modicum of the dreams and ideals possessed by Poprishchin in "Zapiski sumashchedshego," nor does he possess the madly inspired ambition of Barsukov in "Vladimir 3-i stepeni." His desired achievements are all of a very low nature: to be called a major, to dress well, to flirt, etc....

Gippius' observations in connection with Gogol's depictions of civil servants are especially well expressed in connection with Poprishchin's ambitions. He finds that it was Poprishchin alone who realized that his dreams and ideals were unrealizable because of social factors. Without giving these undue emphasis, Gogol does introduce them, along with personal emotions into this story of unrequited love.

Later in 1835 Gogol wrote his comedy masterpiece, Revizor. Gippius sees this work as a major turning point both in Gogol's personal life and in his art. Significantly, it was at this time that he began to relate his work as a writer to a personal mission - notably to fulfilling the role of a comic author. Gogol felt that a good influence might be exerted upon society through the medium of laughter:

> V Revizore ia reshilsia sobrat' v odnu kuchu vse durnoe v Rossii, kakoe ia togda znal, vse nespravedlivosti, kakie delaiutsia v tekh mestakh i v tekh sluchaiakh, gde bol'she vsego trebuetsia ot cheloveka spravedlivosti, i za odnim razom posmeiatsia nad vsem.[35]

In his Avtorskaia ispoved' Gogol implies that the comic in his earlier works, i.e., before Revizor was necessary only as self-diversion:

> Na menia nakhodili pripadki toski, mne samomu neobasnimoi, kotoraia proiskhodila, mozhet byt', ot moego boleznennogo sostoianiia. Chtoby razvlekat' sebia samogo, ia pridumyval sebe vse smeshnoe, chto tol'ko mog vydumat' . . . vovse ne zabotias' o tom, zachem eto, dlia chego, i komu ot etogo vyidet kakaia pol'za.[36]

Gippius, however, does not accept this explanation. He sees in the works written by Gogol in the years 1831-35 more than a carefree, spontaneous laughter which Gogol had associated with pure amusement. For Gippius, these works show Gogol as having reached an extremely high stage of aesthetic self-awereness. It is only in the two stories, "Shpon'ka" and "Povest' o tom..." that Gogol's statement about laughter has any relevance for Gippius.[37]

While Gippius argues that much more was at issue in most of Gogol's earlier works than pure amusement, he does agree that

Revizor marks a major stage in Gogol's artistic development. It is in connection with this play that Gogol undergoes a new transformation. This is the beginning of Gogol's new profile, i.e., the moralizing individualist, which further increases the complexity of his already dominant personal aesthetic profile.[38]

It should be noted that Gogol had already touched upon the moral influence of art in "Portret" and in the essays from Arabeski, where, for example, in his discussion of music, he stresses its power as having a positive effect on even the most callous mercenary:

> Pust', pri mogushchestvennom udare smycha tvoego, smiatennaia dusha grabitelia pochuvstvuet, khotia na mig, ugryzenie sovesti, spekuliator rasteriaet svoi raschety, besstydstvo i naglost' i nevol'no vyronit slezu pred sozdaniem talanta. O, ne ostavliai nas, bozhestvo nashe![39]

In his discussion of Revizor Gippius considers in some depth the traditions and development of Russian comedy, which he sees as an outgrowth of the French classical tradition of Molière and Beaumarchais. He finds their comic influence (involving the farcical devices of both French national comedy and *commedia dell' àrte*) still discernible in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when vaudeville dominated the Russian stage. While Gogol borrowed many

of the elements of farce from this tradition, he also introduced into his plays elements of the Ukrainian puppet theatre with which he had been in more direct contact.[40] Furthermore, Gogol could call upon recent achievements in the heavily dialogized societal comedies (svetskaia razgovornaia komediia) of Russian writers like Griboedov, Shakhovskoi and Zagoskin.[41]

What Gippius finds original in Gogol's play was that he combined both the elements of chance misunderstanding so common to comedy with a conscious deception on the part of an imposter (Khlestakov moving from an unwitting beneficiary of a misunderstanding, to a conscious exploiter of the situation). Gogol's transformation of a typical comic archtype, the liar, into a fantasist - for this is what Khlestakov is - is also novel.

Another feature in Gogol's comedy which Gippius considers worthy of notice is that both his settings and his characters are highly imaginary. His characters are not portrayals of real people, but artistic creations of certain types drawn from real life and refracted through the prism of the author's mind. Gippius is strongly convinced that Gogol does not want to depict virtuous heroes - for there is not a

single positive character in the play, another highly original feature of the work - and that he does not demand from his characters any degree of verisimilitude. Instead Gogol reveals the despicable and the insignificant, for it was part of his task to expose these vices in society.

Additionally, while Gogol adhered to many traditions of classical theatre, he rejected one of its main features, that of the love intrigue. Gippius sees an explanation for the absence of this tradition in Gogol's belief in his self-proclaimed mission as a comic writer, for whom social significance was especially important.[42] Indeed, Gogol believed that laughter could have a moral effect, that it could reform mankind, or as Gippius puts it:

> [Gogol] v polovine 30-kh godov . . . rasschityvaet bol'she vsego na silu "vysokogo i tonkogo uma," kotoryi dolzhen sozdat' smekh "elektricheskii, zhivitel'nyi," raznesti "po vsem nervam osvezhaiushchego naslazhdeniia" i etoi svoei esteticheskoi deistvennost'iu proizvesti effekt moral'nyi: ispravit' cheloveka.[43]

Revizor did not fulfill Gogol's expectations, and so, for the second time, he departed the scene of his shattered hopes. The period in his life following this failure is generally considered the time when his aesthetical development reached its peak. Gogol's sojourn in Italy

was to a great extent responsible for this belief, and Gippius believes that "Rim," written after three years' in the "Eternal City," can be regarded as the fullest expression of the aesthetic awareness, Gogol developed in the 1830's. Gogol was preoccupied with the question: "vsiakii li material vozmozhen dlia khudoznika?"[44] Gippius believes that Gogol's answer to this was yes, but as a result of his aesthetic development, Gogol now lays emphasis on the fact that:

> Iskustvo - svet, ozariaiushchii uzhasnuiu deistvitel'nost', i etot svet, - visshaia tsennost' v mire, oslozhniaetsia novym zadaniem: sdelat' etot svet - svetom nuzhnym dlia vsekh liudei, ne dlia odnogo khudozhnika.[45]

It was in Rome also that Gogol's earlier solipsistic individualism begins to have a greater effect on his moralizing stance. According to Gippius this tendency was clearly noticable in Gogol when he was preparing to leave Russia in 1836, by which time Gogol allegedly saw himself, if only subconsciously, as the chosen arbiter of Russia's spiritual development. Gippius explains Gogol's reworking of his earlier writings as being due to the growth in this moral messianism.

The messianism is also to be seen, for example, in having the

important person in "Shinel" be punished by having his coat stolen, because he failed to meet his moral obligations to Bashmachkin.[46] It was this moral messianism which Gippius finds responsible for leading Gogol to his third idyll, but before he was to experience this, Gogol was yet to write his most famous work, Mertvye dushi, where, in Gippius' opinion, Gogol chose to write about a lifestyle, with which he was quite unfamiliar, that of provincial Russia.[47]

One would expect that, since Mertvye dushi is Gogol's most significant work of art, Gippius would devote a lot of attention to its characters and plot. This is however, not the case. While Gippius' treatment of these is not insubstantial, his discussion of the *poema* is subordinate to his overall aim of giving an accurate picture of Gogol's artistic and personal development. He considers that Mertvye dushi is the highest step in this development, but at this level Gogol had transcended real life. He sees his own creations as amusing or terrible caricatures with which he can find no common ground.

It is to Gippius' credit that, unlike Belinskii and his followers (who saw in the *poema* the highest level of Gogol's *realistic* depiction of life and social ills) he tried to avoid giving a one-sided analysis of

Gogol's work. In Gippius' opinion, up to the time when Gogol started writing Mertvye dushi, he could have moved in one of three possible directions:

> Pervaia - sozdavat' ideal'nye, otreshennye ne tol'ko ot sovremennosti, no i voobshche ot deistvitel'noi zhizni - miry... Vtoraia - idealizirovat', romantizirovat' deistvitel'nost'... Tret'ia vozmozhnost' - protivopostavit' zhizni - smeshnoi ili strashnoi - svoiu, podniavshuiusia nad nei lichnost' i s vysoty lichnogo samosoznaniia izobrazhat' iavleniia zhizni, kak "smeshnye ili strashnye karikatury".[48]

In Gogol's choice, i.e., the third direction, Gippius sees the essence of Gogol's realism, a realism, which never ceased being romantic. Gippius attributes Gogol's realistically inclined romanticism to the author's close ties with the traditions of Ukrainian comedy, his own psychological characteristics and Pushkin's influence.[49]

Before considering the whole of Mertvye dushi in the light of Gogol's aesthetic views, Gippius gives a detailed picture of construable connections between the *poema* and both foreign and domestic literary traditions.

Like Revizor, Mertvye dushi was based on a migratory anecdote. Apart from the traditions of the travel novel (*Reiserroman*)

and the picaresque novel (Don Quixote stood as a very significant example of the two) Gogol's *poema* can be projected against the backdrop of Narezhnyi's and Bulgarin's picaresque novels. However, Gippius sees similarities between Gogol's *poema* and these examples only in the most general way. Gogol omits the intricacies of plot required by the traditions of the adventure novels, so Mertvye dushi became a "... roman odnoi avantiury."[50] Furthermore, Gippius argues that, just as in Revizor, Gogol omits any meaningful love intrigue.

Gippius claims that the fundamental motivating force behind Mertvye dushi had its origin in Gogol's sense of self-awareness (samosoznanie) which, beginning with his early school years in Nezhin, involved Gogol's sense of being superior to the people and the life around him. Through Gogol's aestheticism, this self-awareness developed into an all-embracing moralism which is expressed through the *poema*.. As a result of this moral awareness Gogol did not depict therein characters in the normal sense of that word, but "sushchestvovateli" or *vegetators* - what Gippius calls a "sborishche urodov" or assemblage of freaks. Throughout the *poema* Gogol introduces *vegetators* from the lowest levels of human life whose

main characteristic is that of a self-satisfied visceral behavior.

While examining Gogol's characters, Gippius finds in their world two types of banality: one is fundamentally static or devoid of movement, the other is dynamic, this being the one in which Gippius finds the essence of Gogol's brand of comedy.[51] Any dynamism the work contains is illusory, because the ambitions and desires of *vegetators* are extremely limited and easily satisfied. Gogol's characters yearn for "higher pursuits" which are merely physiological, i.e., satisfaction with good food, clothing, domestic comfort, rank, decoration, etc. Gippius rightly states that these elemental forms of a purely physiological striving or fulfilment are the only kind Gogol's characters can possibly know: "Eti zhe - elementarnye formy chisto-fiziologicheskogo estetizma, edinstvenno dostupnogo etim sushchestvovateliam..."[52]

To be sure, Gippius sees Gogol not only as a purely comic writer, but as one who occasionally steps beyond the comic and into the genuinely tragic. As was mentioned earlier in connection with Poprishchin, social concerns push physiology into the background, and the "nichtozhnoe sushchestvovanie v tselom"[53] appears in a different

tragic light to Gogol himself.

Gippius finds that after Mertvye dushi Gogol's extreme individualism took a new path, and his highly developed moralism led him towards religion. As this moralism intensified, it underwent a transformation, and thus the didactic was replaced by the prophetic, the teacher having given way to the proselytiser. Gogol, who has thoroughly ensconced himself in religiosity, offers himself as the chosen one who would lead his people on the quest for the beautiful. Vybrannye mesta is what Gippius regards as Gogol's third idyll. In fact, Gippius considers it a purely literary work, which is the natural and legitimate outcome of Gogol's ideological and aesthetic development.[54]

By this time, in Gippius' opinion, Gogol had completely outgrown his former aestheticism. In the third idyll Gippius sees Gogol striving to find some justification for the insignificant people he had depicted in his *poema*.. Gippius argues that Gogol had always had very close ties (even if unconsciously) with the world of "existers" which he himself had ridiculed and from which he had tried to break away. He was rising above this milieu during the years of aestheticism and

moralism. Gippius is convinced that after Mertvye dushi Gogol (now consciously) returned to his own traditions. He idealized these by drawing a picture of an idyllic domestic, social and political life of morally transformed people, a life that was made into a stronghold in the battle against the devil.

In the 1930's Gogol's religious turning point will be explained by Gippius as being primarily due to social and communal conditions. He also adduces such ideological influences as the religious idealism of his friends, (e.g., Zhukovskii, Pletnev, and Iazykov). Besides these influences, Gippius finds that Gogol's living abroad, his consequent isolation from Russia, and the growth of Slavophilism, all played an important role in the further development of his religious consciousness which found expression in Vybrannye mesta ...[55]

Already in Gippius's interpretation of Gogol's third idyll one can sense his later orientation, i.e., his emphasizing the importance of the "social" and "communal" factors in man's life. This is, however, not surprising, for it should be kept in mind that Gippius' first monograph on Gogol *was* after all a Soviet book, albeit one from 1924.

Conclusion

Having examined the three foregoing diverse interpretations of Gogol's work, one could ask the question: whose interpretation should be accepted as the most correct; or which one of them is more in accordance with the essence of Gogol's work? The fact that Gogol's literary output is fundamentally ambiguous should prevent one from making precipitous conclusion of the sort that categorizes Belinskii and his followers.

While one cannot but be aware of Belinskii's one-sided views on art overall, and Gogol's art in particular, his literary criticism should not be over-simplified or summarily dismissed. It is true that he gave extreme prominence to the didactic element in literature, and found in Gogol an embodiment of his own views on the need for art to reflect reality and severe social ills (the only views according to which his contemporaries and the following generation's authors were urged to approach their art). In spite of this, Belinskii must be credited with being aware of purely aesthetic literary values, especially but not exclusively in the first period of his literary-critical activity. Although his judgement on writers he discovered and championed was later

re-evaluated, these usually became unqualified greats of Russian literature (e.g., Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevskii). One must also credit Belinskii for his passionate struggle to improve the world, a struggle, which he carried out enthusiastically and consistently. In order for him to have carried the day, Belinskii (and his contemporaries) had to have believed in the means he used. One of these was Gogol's oeuvre, which for the most part Belinskii saw as a realistic portrayal of the real world. However one-sided and occasionally blinkered this view is, one must allow for its having had some literary-historical basis.

In view of the one-sidedness in Belinskii's assessment of Gogol, the re-evaluation of his interpretation of Gogol's work was inevitable. After all, not one of Gogol's characters corresponds to the characterological requirements for the personages of realist novels.

Annenskii realized this and turned readers' attention particularily to the question of Gogol's aesthetic views and also to the problem of the psychology of literary creativity. However, he saw Gogol not only as a writer, but also as an individual with a heightened sense of romantic idealism, for whom the everyday world and its inhabitants were unbearable. It is Annenskii's understanding of the

essence of Gogol's art that is most deserving of acceptance, for Annenskii allows Gogol to be an individual with his doubts and human failings, and not just a depicter of social injustices.

Gippius pursued a similar line of interpretation, while examining Gogol's work and Gogol himself in the light of probable influences stemming from both foreign and domestic traditions. While attempting to trace Gogol's artistic and aesthetic development, Gippius argues quite correctly that no writer can free himself totally from past traditions and contemporary influences. He makes a good case for this argument in his study of Gogol. Gippius' views on Gogol - the man and the writer - within a broad historical context (an approach that was very fruitfully developed by Vinogradov around the same time) enable one to perceive and understand the essence of Gogol's art more profoundly.

New and more dynamic interpretations of Gogol's art have been developed with the passage of time (Mann's work, for example). Annenskii's and Gippius' interpretations will, however, justifiably keep their place as fundamental points of departure for further developments in Gogol studies.

Notes

Introduction

[1]D. S. Merezhkovskii, Gogol' i chort' (Letchworth, England: Prideaux Press, 1976, Reprint of the original Russian edition: Moskva: Knigoizdatel'stvo 'Skorpion', 1906.) For a more detailed discussion of Gogol's religious aesthetics see N. V. Zen'kovskii, N. V. Gogol' (Paris: YMCA Press, n.d.); and K. V. Mochulskii, Dukhovnyi put' Gogolia (Paris, 1933.)

[2]This theme will be discussed in detail in Chapter III.

[3]A. A. Grigor'ev, Literaturnaia kritika (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1967), pp. 157-203.

Chapter I

[1]D. S. Mirsky, A History of Russian Literature (New York: Alfred A. Knope, 1960), p. 141. (By French and German Romanticism Mirskii means both the translated works from these literatures as points of orientation, influence, etc., and Russian original works which reflected their poetics, i.e., the poetics of Hugo, Hoffmann and others. By Russian naturalism he has in mind works by Pogodin, Dal' and Gogol.) While it is commonly agreed that, national literatures overall are rarely, if ever, homogeneous, the Mirsky view echoed further by V. V. Vinogradov, M. Slonim, and others, justifiably emphasizes competing, pan-European trends in Russian literature, the non-dominance of any particular one giving a sense of pronounced heterogeneity.

[2]M. L. Slonim, An Outline of Russian Literature (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 57-58.

[3]V. V. Vinogradov, Evoliutsiia russkogo naturalizma (hereinafter is referred to as Evoliutsiia...), (Leningrad: Academia, 1929), pp. 89-95.

[4]D. I. Chizhevskii, "Neizvestnyi Gogol'" in Novyi zhurnal 36, (1951), pp. 120-158.

[5]N. V. Zen'kovskii, N. V. Gogol' (Paris: YMCA Press, n.d.), p. 19.

[6] V. G. Belinskii, "Vzgliad na russkuiu literaturu 1847 goda," Sobranie sochinenii (hereinafter referred to as Ss) Vol. 8, (Moskva: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1976-1982), pp. 350-351.

[7]Besides Vinogradov's Evoliutsiia..., see V. V. Gippius, Gogol' (Leningrad: 1924); Zenkovskii, N. V. Gogol'; Iu. Mann, Poetika Gogolia (Moskva: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1978.)

[8]Belinskii, "Otvet *Moskvitianinu,*" Ss. Vol. 8, pp. 310-320. (F. V. Bulgarin, O. I. Senkovskii and N. I. Grech were the owners and main contributors of Biblioteka dlia chteniia, a literary journal founded in 1834. They were Belinskii's opponents.

[9]The French *école frénétique* was a leading literary movement of the 1820's and early 1830's.

[10]Bulgarin's article about Gogol's poema appeared in Severnaia pchela, 119 (1842.) The quote is taken from Belinskii, Ss, Vol. 5, p. 541.

[11]Ibid. Bulgarin's further article on Gogol was published also in Severnaia pchela, 158 (1842.)

[12] Belinskii, "Otvet *Moskvitianinu,*" Ss, Vol. 8 p. 310.

[13]Belinskii, "Vzgliad na russkuiu literaturu 1847 goda", Ss,

Vol. 8, pp. 337-415.

[14]Belinskii, "Otvet *Moskvitianinu*," Ss., Vol. 8, pp. 290-336.

[15]Belinskii, "Vzgliad na russkuiu literaturu 1847 goda," Ss., Vol. 8, p. 345.

[16]Belinskii, "Vzgliad na russkuiu literaturu 1847 goda," Ss., Vol. 8, p. 347.

[17]Donald Fanger, Dostoevskii and Romantic Realism (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 3-28. In the first chapter Fanger discusses in detail the development of realism in Russian literature.

[18]D. S. Mirsky, Modern Russian Literature (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), p. 16.

[19]V. V. Gippius, Gogol' (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Mysl', 1924), p. 202.

[20]Ibid. (Gippius' study on Gogol will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV.)

[21]V. I. Kuleshov, Natural'naia shkola v russkoi literature XIX veka (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Prosveshchenie, 1965), p. 13.

[22]A. G. Tseitlin, Stanovlenie realizma v russkoi literature (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1965.)

[23]Ibid., p. 30.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Zen'kovskii, p. 62.

[26]Vinogradov, Evoliutsiia..., see also: Gogol i naturalnaia shkola (Leningrad: Obrazovanie,1925); Etiudi o stilie Gogolia (Leningrad:

Academia, 1926.) It should be noted that the first two studies argue strongly in favor of a pan-European romantic genesis and basis for the development of a Russian natural school. On the other hand, Etiudy... focuses primarily on the specific features of the *school* as it developed in the 1840's. In this regard Vinogradov is the most thorough in providing concrete literary features of the natural school and its tie to Gogol's legacy.

[27]For further development of this theme see R. L. Busch, Freneticist Literature in the Russian Romanticist Period: Narrative Prose of The Early 1830's (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan, Ph.D. dissertation, 1972.)

[28]See note #8.

[29]Vinogradov, Evoliutsiia ..., p. 89.

[30]Ibid., p. 163.

[31]Ibid., p. 155.

[32]Ibid. A. V. Nikitenko (1804-1877) a serf by origin, became prominent as a journalist, editor and especially as a censor.

[33]Ibid., p. 110. See also: Belinskii, "Russkaia literatura v 1842 godu," Ss, Vol. 5, p. 199. In this article Belinskii strongly disapproves of the French "physiological school." As an alternative to this school he cites the works of George Sand as a more relative and positive example to follow.

[34]V. G. Belinskii o Gogol'e, pp. 428-429.

[35]Kuleshov, pp. 12-13.

[36]Ibid., p. 103.

[37]Ibid., p. 100.

[38]N. G. Chernyshevskii, Ocherki Gogolevskogo perioda russkoi literatury, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii Vol. I-XV (hereinafter referred to as Pss) Vol. 3, (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo Khudozhestvennoi Literatury, 1939-1950), pp. 5-310.

[39]Ibid., p. 20. From his further discussion of *Gogolevskii period* it is obvious that by "edinstvennaia shkola" Chernyshevskii means the *natural school.*

[40]I. F. Annenskii, Knigi otrazhenii (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1979), p. 205.

[41]D. S. Merezhkovskii, Gogol i chort (Letchworth, England: Prideaux Press, 1976)

[42]Ibid., p. 2.

[43]Ibid., p. 3.

[44]Ibid., pp. 12-13.

[45]V. Briusov, "Ispepelennyi," Vesy, 4 (1909), p. 100.

[46]Ibid., p.114.

[47]Ibid., p. 100.

[48]Ibid., pp. 102-103.

[49]Ibid., pp. 100-101.

[50]See: Merezhkovskii, Gogol' i chort

[51]Briusov, p. 120.

[52]A. Belyi, Lug zelenyi. Kniga statei (New York: The Slavic Series, 1967), p. 100.

[53]Ibid., p. 99.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Ibid., pp. 103-104.

[56]Ibid., p. 107.

[57]Ibid., pp. 115-121.

[58]R. Maguire, ed., Gogol from the Twentieth Century (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 3-55.

[59]Ibid., pp. 22-24.

[60]B. M. Eichenbaum, Literatura. Teoriia. Kritika. Polemika. (Leningrad: 1927), pp. 116-149.

[61]D. I. Chizhevskii, "About Gogol's 'Overcoat'" in: Gogol from the Twentieth Century, pp. 295-322.

[62]V. F. Pereverzev, Literaturovedenie. Sbornik Statei (Moskva: 1928), p. 12.

[63]Pereverzev, Gogol'. Dostoevskii. Issledovaniia. (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Sovietskii Pisatel', 1982), p. 56.

[64]Ibid., p. 58.

[65]See for example: M. B. Khrapchenko, Tvorchestvo Gogolia (Moskva: Sovetskii Pisatel', 1956); G. A. Gukovskii, Realizm Gogolia (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo Khudozhestvennoi Literatury, 1959.)

[66]Iu. Mann, Poetika Gogolia (Moskva: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1978), p. 396.

[67]Ibid., p. 16.

[68]Ibid. p. 16.

[69]Ibid., p. 40.

Chapter II

[1]T. Proctor, Dostoevsky and the Belinskij School of Literary Criticism, (Paris, 1969), p. 36. I am indebted to Proctor's study for some of the formulations which appear in my exposition. For further discussion of Belinskii's aesthetic and philosophical development see: G. M. Fridlender, "Belinskii kak teoretik literatury," V dvizhenii vremeni (Moskva: Sovremennik, 1983), pp. 113-150.

[2]Fichte's influence on Belinskii merits little study as it was of extremely short duration (from 1836-37) and a minor factor in the formation of Belinskii's theories (although during this period Belinskii's interest in ethical problems deepened).

[3]V. G. Belinskii, "O russkoi povesti i povestiakh g. Gogolia," Sobranie sochinenii (hereinafter referred to as Ss) vol. 1 (Moskva: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1976-1982), pp. 141-143.

[4]Ibid., p. 145.

[5]Ibid., p. 138.

[6]Ibid., p. 150.

[7]Ibid., pp. 140-141.

[8]Ibid., p. 162.

[9]Ibid., p. 169.

[10]Belinskii, Ss, Vol. 5, pp. 190-223.

[11]Ibid., p. 203.

[12]Belinskii, "O russkoi povesti i povestiakh g. Gogolia" Ss, Vol. 1, pp. 179-181.

[13]Belinskii, "Pokhozhdeniia Chichikova, ili *Mertvye dushi*," Ss, Vol. 5, pp. 43-55.; "Neskol'ko slov o poeme Gogolia 'Pokhozhdeniia Chichikova ili Mertvye Dushi'," Ss, Vol. 5, pp. 56-63.

[14]N. V. Gogol, "O dvizhenii zhurnalnoi literatury," V. V. Gippius ed., Polnoe sobranie sochinenii (hereinafter referred to as Pss), Vol. 8, (Moskva: Akademiia Nauk, 1949-1952), pp. 156-177.

[15]V. S. Pokhodaev, ed., Russkaia Eestetika i kritika 40-50kh godov XIX veka (Moskva: Iskusstvo, 1982), pp.42-53. See also: Belinskii, Ss, Vol. 5, pp. 139-161.

[16]Belinskii, "Neskol'ko slov o poeme Gogolia 'Pokhozhdeniia Chichikova ili *Mertvye dushi* '" Ss, Vol. 5, pp. 56-57.

[17]Aksakov, "Ob"iasnenie po povodu poemy Gogolia, *Mertvye dushi* " in Moskvitianin 9 (1842), pp. 220-229.; Belinskii, "Ob"iasnenie na ob"iasnenie po povodu poemy Gogolia *'Mertvye dushi*", Ss, Vol. 5, pp. 139-160.

[18]Belinskii, "Otvet *Moskvitianinu*," Ss, Vol. 8, p. 295.

[19]Ibid.

[20]A. A. Grigor'ev, Literaturnaia Kritika (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1967), p. 185.

[21]K. Mochulskii, Dukhovnii put' Gogolia (Paris, 1933), p. 93.

[22]Ibid., p. 104.

[23]Ibid., p. 105.

[24]Ibid., pp. 86-87.

[25]A. V. Druzhinin, "Kritika gogolevskogo perioda russkoi literatury i nashi k nei otnosheniia," Literaturnaia kritika (Moskva: Sovietskaia Rossiia, 1983), pp. 122-176.

[26]N. G. Chernyshevskii, "Esteticheskie otnosheniia iskusstva k deistvitel'nosti," Polnoe sobranie sochinenii Vol. 2, (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo Khudozhestvennoi Literatury, 1939-1950), pp. 5-93.

Chapter III

[1]I. F. Annenskii, "Obrazovatel'noe znachenie rodnogo iazyka" Russkaia shkola (Ianvar', 1890), p. 40.

[2]I. F. Annenskii, Knigi otrazhenii (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1979), p. 206.

[3]V. I. Ivanov, Borozdy i mezhi (Letchworth, England: Bradda Books Ltd., 1971), p. 205.

[4]Annenskii, Knigi otrazhenii, p. 5.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid., p. 123.

[7]These five articles were written between 1890-1909 and are: "O formakh fantasticheskogo u Gogolia" (1890); "Khudozhestvennyi idealizm Gogolia" (1902); "Problemy Gogolevskogo iumora - Nos, Portret" (1905); and "Estetika *Mertvykh dush* "(1909).

[8]V. Setchkarev, Studies in the Life and Works of Innokentii Annenskii (Hague: Mouton and Co., 1963), p. 18.

[9]N. V. Gogol', Pss. Vol. 8, pp. 9-115.

[10]Ibid., p. 18.

[11]N. V. Gogol', "Ob arkhitekture nyneshnego vremeni," Pss. Vol. 8, pp. 56-76. Also: "Zhenshchina," Pss. Vol. 8, pp. 143-148.

[12]Setchkarev, p. 55.

[13]Annenskii, Knigi otrazhenii, p. 207.

[14]Ibid., p. 208.

[15]Ibid., p. 210.

[16]See: V. Nabokov in his study Nikolai Gogol (Norfolk, Connecticut: New Direction Books, 1944), pp. 63-73.

[17]Annenskii, Knigi otrazhenii, p. 211.

[18]Ibid., p. 213.

[19]Ibid., p. 13.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., p. 216.

[22]See Schelling's argument in Chapter II, pp. 1-2.

[23]Annenskii, Knigi otrazhenii, p. 15.

[24]Ibid., p. 17.

[25]Ibid., p. 18.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid., p. 20.

[28]Ibid., p. 217.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid., p. 221.

[31]Ibid., p. 228.

[32]Ibid., p. 229.

Chapter IV

[1]These biographical data are taken from G. M. Fridlender's foreword to Gippius' Ot Pushkina do Bloka (Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1966), pp. 3-6.

[2]V. V. Gippius, Gogol' (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Mysl', 1924), p. 5.

[3]V. V. Gippius, Ot Pushkina do Bloka pp. 46-201; See also: V. V. Gippius, ed., N. V. Gogol'. Materialy i issledovaniia (Moskva: 1936), pp. 151-200.

[4]Ibid., p. 5.

[5]Elsewhere, Gippius even cites Lenin to reinforce his arguments.

[6]Gippius, Ot Pushkina do Bloka , p. 46.

[7]See: Chapter I, pp. 31-32.

[8]Gippius, Gogol', p. 9.

[9]Ibid., p. 17.

[10]Ibid., p. 21.

[11]Ibid., pp. 26-28.

[12]Ibid., p. 26.

[13]Ibid., p. 11.

[14]Ibid., pp. 28-30. Gippius refutes the assumption according to which Gogol could not have written his "Vechera na kanune Ivana Kupala" under the influance of L. Tieck and E. T. A. Hoffmann, because he did not know German, and the first translation of Tieck's "Liebeszauber" appeared in Russian only in 1830, the same year, when Gogol wrote his story. Gippius shows that Tieck's story appeared in Russian in 1827. Furthermore, much of Hoffmann's work also appeared in Russian by 1830. Gippius' standpoint is supported by F.C. Driessen, Gogol as a Short-Story Writer (Paris: Mouton and Co., 1965), pp. 74-76. See also: V. Erlich, Gogol (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), pp. 34-35; 67-68; 79-80; 91.

[15]Ibid., p. 33.

[16]The stories are listed not in chronological order, but in order of relevance to Gippius' argument (whose own ordering of the stories fails to consider their actual compositional ordering in Vechera... and its implications for his argument).

[17]Gippius, Gogol', pp. 31-32.

[18]Ibid., pp. 28-29. Gippius, in his forword to Gogol's Pss (published in 1940), argues that, to a certain degree, these romantic characters already contain within themselves the realistic features of Gogol's later works.

[19]Nevskii prospekt," "Portret," and "Zapiski sumasshedshego" (originally entitled "Klochki iz zapisok sumasshedshego"), were also included in Arabeski.

[20]Gippius, in his later study Ot Pushkina do Bloka, claims it is in Gogol's article, "Neskol'ko slov o Pushkine," that Gogol's views on the role of art are most accurately presented. Gippius now underlines that Gogol here advocates realism and legitimacy of the "obyknovennoe" in art.

[21]Gogol', "Skulptura, zhivopis' i muzyka, Pss, Vol. 1, pp. 12-13.

[22]Gogol originally assigns this role to sculpture but in a later discussion he ascribes it to music. (See also Chapter III, note 28.)

[23]Gippius, Gogol', p. 42.

[24]Gogol', "Poslednii den' Pompei," Pss, Vol. 8, p. 111.

[25]Gippius, Gogol', p. 42.

[26]Gogol', "Zhenshchina," Pss, Vol. 8, p. 145.

[27]Gippius, Gogol', p. 53.

[28]Ibid., p. 58.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid., p. 38, pp. 81-82.

[31]Ibid., p. 83.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid., p. 86.

[34]Ibid., p. 51.

[35]Gogol', "Avtorskaia Ispoved'," Pss, Vol. 8, p. 439.

[36]Ibid., p. 440.

[37]Gippius, Gogol', pp. 77-79.

[38]Ibid., p. 87.

[39]Gogol, "Skulptura, zhivopis', muzyka," Pss, Vol. 8, p. 12.

[40]Gippius, Gogol', p. 94.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid., p. 102.

[43]Ibid., p. 109.

[44]Ibid., p. 121.

[45]Ibid., p. 122.

[46]Ibid., pp. 129-132.

[47]This contradicts Pereverzev's arguement that Gogol was completely at home with this theme.

[48]Gippius, Gogol, p.136.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid., pp. 138-139.

[51]Ibid., p. 156.

[52]Ibid., p. 159.

[53]Ibid., p. 167.

[54]Gippius, Gogol', p. 169.

[54]Gippius, "N. V. Gogol'," Pss. Vol. 1, p. 51. Gippius' explanation now favours Chernyshevskii's argument, the essence of which is that, instead of focusing on personal intention and motivations (basically the same for all men) one has to make a close examination of man's milieu.

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